



PRAYERLINES

MARCH 2007



| *sharing Jesus, changing lives*



'Jesus the Guru', India

PRAYERLINES



“The greatest tragedy to befall a person is to have sight but lack vision.”

Helen Keller

Here’s one of the paradoxes of the Christian life. We are called to be pilgrims. Likewise we are called to establish deep roots.

CMS is on a journey. As the staff gears up for the move to Oxford we’re reminding ourselves we’re a pilgrim people, that we must trust that God will go before us, as always, and that he will show us his will for each step.

This is where the other part of the paradox comes into play. To get a steer on the future it’s helpful to re-discover our heritage. By revisiting the vision of our founders we can discover afresh how this vision can live on among us today.

Continue to pray for CMS in a time a great change and great opportunity.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Martin". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "John" and "Martin" being significantly larger and more stylized.

John Martin CMS Head of Communication

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

WEEK 1

3 – 9 MARCH

WEEKEND FOCUS

Saturday: Read Isaiah 57:14–15

The first half of this chapter was a condemnation of transgressors. Now the shrill noise of judgment gives way to the gentle music of assurance. With God there is always hope after judgement. Isaiah uses the metaphor of highway building to call on the people to clear away obstructions to the divine will and law, to cultivate a contrite and humble spirit. These are necessary conditions for the next steps of the people of God in mission. And for us today, too.

Sunday: Read Isaiah 57:16–21

God's anger is always limited by his infinite store of grace, mercy and compassion (see Psalm 103:8–13). Here God's anger becomes God's healing and finally God's peace: wholeness, shalom (verses 17–19). That's what the Gospel announces: God's will that people near and far will know peace and wholeness. For Isaiah's hearers, 'near' and 'far' meant Jews living in their homeland and those of the diaspora. The Gospel brings a wider perspective. In Ephesians 2:13–17 Paul speaks of this state of wholeness as God's will for the entire creation, those who are near (Jews) and those far off (Gentiles). Pray that the people you pray for this week will be agents of that wholeness.

M

We give thanks for CMS members, for their commitment to CMS and for all they do to further the work of mission through CMS. This month we pray for the East Central and South conferences, taking place 2–4 March and 23–25 March respectively.

T

“Fresh Expressions of Global Mission” is the theme at the East Central Conference and the main speaker is Mark Oxbrow. The South Conference will focus on Africa’s Great Lakes region, and the main speaker is community health pioneer Pat Nickson.

W

Pray that many educators will use *Ending Slavery: an Unfinished Business*, the new, free, resource pack for citizenship, history and RE, now available from **www.cms-uk.org**, thanks to a collaboration between CMS and Citizenship Foundation.

T

We also pray that as a result of using the *Ending Slavery* resource pack, young people across the United Kingdom will be inspired and equipped to join together and take a stand against modern forms of slavery and injustice in the world today.

F

This month, Free for All events will take place in Blackburn (5–9), York (12–16), Bristol (19–23) and Peterborough (26–29). Pray that through the music, drama and dance workshops, the children will understand the importance of freedom for all.



Ayozie Pollendine in Free For All, touring the country (www.freeforalltour.info)

WEEK 2

10 – 16 MARCH

WEEKEND FOCUS

Saturday: Read Isaiah 58:1–5

Here's a poem written to a community that's not at peace with itself. It's not a poem offering easy solutions but a vision of the future where relationships and actions are based on a code of behaviour that's morally and ethically demanding. The core of the problem is a gap between good intentions and good behaviour. Does that sound familiar? Pray that today's church will be set free from the exact same behaviour.

Sunday: Read Isaiah 58:6–9a

Use this passage to help you do a bit of analysis of your prayer list. Are you getting the balance of intercession right? Think about the balance between prayer for your own needs and situations close to hand, versus prayer for people who fit the descriptions in this passage, people and places needing not only our prayers but our generosity as well. What are some places and situations that need a reply from God as in the first part of verse 9?

M

Pray for the Church of England Walk of Witness in central London on 24 March to mark the bicentenary of the Act abolishing the slave trade in the British Empire. Further details: www.makingourmark.org.uk or telephone 0870 321 2005.

T

About 25 key leaders will gather in Kathmandu from 5 to 9 March for a South Asia Christian Youth Core Group meeting. CMS regional manager Adrian Watkins will convene this group as they work towards another South Asian youth conference.

W

Adrian then meets mission personnel in Butwal (Jean and Paul Dobbing), Tansen (Jason and Tracy Day; Michael and Sarah Puttick) and Kathmandu (Gill Parkin, Simon and Zoe Fagg, Christine Stone, Ram Prasad Shrestha and Manoj Pradhananga).

T

Sister Anna John runs Bethel Ashram, part of the Parkal Mission in Andhra Pradesh, which is a mission work of the Church of South India (CSI). Last year, Sister Anna did a short course on Applied Theology at Redcliffe College (sponsored by CMS).

F

Sister Anna's work includes being Principal of the CSI English-Medium School at Bhupalpally, overseeing a home for boys at Gandhinagar, providing a medical service in remote village areas and reaching surrounding villages with the Gospel.



Tracy and Jason Day at Tansen Hospital, Nepal

WEEK 3

17 – 23 MARCH

WEEKEND FOCUS

Saturday: Read Isaiah 58:9b–12

Several of the OT prophets record divine “if...then” statements and here’s an example. Several are famous and often quoted. “If you my people will...then I will...” says the Lord. Take a piece of paper and make two columns. Head the left side ‘If...’ and the right side ‘Then...’ Now jot down the gist of the ifs and thens in this passage: If (what God requires) and Then (what is promised in return). Now use your imagination. Take one or two of your prayer topics for this week and try to arrange them on an ‘If...then’ basis. Try to imagine how God might see them: what might he ask of you (If) and how would you hope he might act in answer (Then)? Expect surprises and maybe some challenges.

Sunday: Read Isaiah 59:1

Here’s one of the great declarations of the Old Testament. Pause for a few moments. Repeat it. Savour its grandeur. You were given a huge assignment yesterday and you might want to continue with it. Use this verse to refresh one or two of your ‘If...Then’s to link your prayers and God’s saving work.

M

Shin Yong Tang, South-east Asia Regional Manager, asks prayer for staff recruitment at the Action Love Singapore office. A couple from Thailand needs their immigration application approved to come and work with this CMS/Asian Outreach partnership.

T

The Singapore office is also conducting interviews for an accounts clerk. Pray that God would give them the wisdom needed to select the right person in time for the upcoming audit of the Action Love accounts for 2006.

W

Pray for Ross and Sonia Wilson who moved back to Thailand in January for their second term as mission partners. Pray that the right ministry placements will be found and links strengthened as their family settles back into the country.

T

Mission partner Gail Phillip is returning to Thailand from her home assignment in the UK. Pray for her as she settles back into life and ministry at Christ Church Bangkok and RainbowLand Child Development Centre, where she is director.

F

Pray for mission partners Lee and Sally Proudlove and their return to the Philippines. Pray also for Aaron, the latest addition to the family and for Ethan and Lily. Continue to pray for strong partnerships with the Episcopal Church of the Philippines.

WEEK 4

24 – 30 MARCH

WEEKEND FOCUS

Saturday: Read Isaiah 59:1–8

We often think being sent into exile rapidly refined the People of God and the spiritual lessons needed were quickly learned. Not so. Here's proof. This catalogue of personal and public sin makes for grim reading. The prophet is screaming for two things: economic justice and community based on inclusion, not exclusion. Use some of the phrases from this passage to pray for our communities and our world where economic justice and community are still much needed.

Sunday: Read Isaiah 59:20–21

The grim catalogue of sin and corruption goes on throughout the rest of chapter 59, but at the end God has a final word. He will intervene. And somehow he won't be left without witnesses and future generations will know his will and his ways. It's an important perspective to keep in mind when everything seems to be beyond hope. Turn this passage into a prayer for particular people and circumstances you care about.

M

Miranda and Roger Bowen, mission partners in Burundi, are returning to the UK for their final leave this month. Give thanks for the many ways God has used Miranda's management and hospice skills and Roger's teaching abilities in Matana Diocese.

T

Eric and Sandra Read (mission partners) in Katanga in DR Congo, are developing pilot community projects on the edge of Lubumbashi, a city of three million people. Pray that whole communities will be transformed spiritually, socially and physically.

W

After working as CMS Exchange Co-ordinator, Gill Whiting recently arrived in Tabora, Tanzania where she works in the diocesan office and is responsible for community development, administration, discipleship and training.

T

CMS short-term teams give participants an opportunity to connect with Christians who are seeking to make a difference around the world. This year, participants are preparing to visit Ghana, Romania, Russia, Burundi and the Philippines.

F

Today *African Snow* debuts with a three-week run at York Theatre Royal. Pray that this powerful play will be effective in highlighting the plight of the millions enslaved today, and that it will boost CMS's Setting Captives Free campaign to help them.

MISSION BACKGROUND

CMS IN UGANDA

The Church of Uganda was born out of martyrdom and its centenary was marked by the murder of Archbishop Janani Luwum in 1977.

The first CMS missionaries were sent as a result of a letter sent to the Daily Telegraph by HM Stanley, conveying a welcome to Europeans from the King of Buganda. Two years after CMS, in 1879, Roman Catholic White Fathers arrived.

The new king, Mwanga, felt threatened by the Europeans and ordered the murder of Anglican missionary bishop James Hannington. A year later Mwanga ordered 32 national Christians to be burned on the same day, both Catholic and Anglican.

Yet Christianity took root, due to Ugandan zeal for spreading the gospel and a clamour for English-language education. After independence, Uganda saw much bloodshed, through the Amin and Obote years to the recent 20-year war in the north.

Today, of a population of 25.6 million, Christians account for 85 per cent (Anglicans 36 per cent), Muslims 12 per cent. CMS supports 28 British mission partners working in Uganda and enjoys good links with the Church of Uganda and indigenous networks like Mission Together Africa.

PRAYER FOCUS

CMS IS MOVING TO OXFORD

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

The CMS trustees have agreed and announced that the move will take place in June. The building works should be completed by the end of March, so please pray that this phase stays on schedule. Also, pray for staff as they determine what to keep and what to throw away in preparation for the move. We especially want to cut down on excess paper items.

Please pray for our IT team as they come up with a plan as to how to safely and smoothly transport and set up the CMS computer servers.

Continue to pray for the hiring of new staff and for departments that are coping with personnel changes.

Finally, pray for unity among senior staff as decisions regarding the new facility are finalised and pray especially for our Relocation Manager, Gillian Wilcox, that she would be strengthened physically, emotionally and spiritually to handle this huge project.

PRAYER**LINES** 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 Visit www.cms-uk.org

**I will
never
leave
you nor
forsake
you.**