



PRAYERLINES

MAY 2006



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PRAYERLINES



“Prayer is not eloquence, but earnestness; not the definition of helplessness, but the feeling of it; not figures of speech, but earnestness of soul.”

Hannah More

If we haven't reached the state of helplessness in prayer we've hardly begun to pray. One of the recurring challenges in prayer is to how to sustain intercession for people, places and issues where the problems seem insoluble.

I've prayed for China for over 40 years. That taught me the need for a deeper level of prayer where the substance included my feelings of exasperation and powerlessness. We know now that all along God was quietly performing a miracle in China. We rejoice but that's not the end of it. There's still a huge prayer agenda to pursue. God invites us to lay the burden of our concerns on him. And he wants us to trust that he is working even when that's not obvious to human eyes.

Thanks for many emails and letters of encouragement.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Martin". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'J' being particularly large and stylized.

John Martin

CMS Head of Communication

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

WEEK 1

7 – 13 MAY

WEEKEND FOCUS

GOD'S RESURRECTING POWER

Read Ephesians 2:1–5

God's mighty power is known supremely in the resurrection of Christ. Yet according to this passage, that same power is at work in people raising them from death to new life.

It's not just about personal salvation – though it includes that. It goes far wider and deeper. It can transform whole communities – and even nations. So to pray for mission is to pray that the Gospel will do the vital work of transformation and renewal.

It's true, however, that we live temporarily in a present age where sin abounds. Praying for mission will also mean praying that the rampant effects of evil will be curtailed as Christians oppose it and do good.

Lord use our prayers:

To bring the light of the Gospel to those living in darkness,

To bring the hope of the Gospel to those living in despair,

To bring the healing of the Gospel to the lonely,

the disadvantaged, the marginalized.

And to bring the peace of the Gospel to a divided world.

Pax Christi

M

At Christian events from May to September, people will be able to explore the theme of Setting Captives Free through the work of CMS partners with drug addicts, learning what recovering addicts have to teach us about being set free by God.

T

Visitors to CMS stands at events will be invited to taste a chocolate fountain. They will be challenged to think about their own addictions (“Are you a ‘chocaholic’?”) and to see how we all need God’s grace as much as drug addicts and alcoholics.

W

The Christian Resources Exhibition takes place this week in Esher, Surrey. We hope that for many it will be the beginning of a relationship with CMS as they support our work of “setting captives free” and are inspired to do the same in their own communities.

T

The Exodus drug rehabilitation programme, CMS partners in Russia and beyond, host more than 500 addicts in recovery at any one time. Pray also for Teen Challenge in Kazakhstan and Egypt’s Freedom Centre as they work in Muslim majority countries.

F

The Setting Captives Free theme continues in 2007 with a tour of the CMS-commissioned slavery play African Snow. Riding Lights Theatre Company, CMS and various theatres have many practical details to resolve in order to ‘get the show on the road’.



Recovering addicts at a rehabilitation centre run by Exodus in southern Russia

WEEK 2

14 – 20 MAY

WEEKEND FOCUS

GOD'S IMMEASURABLE KINDNESS

Read Ephesians 2:7–10

We have thought previously about God's ultimate purpose – mission is another way of saying it. We get a further snapshot here.

Here is another reason why in CMS we speak of evangelistic mission. At its core it's urging people to accept God's generous invitation in Christ, to taste the immeasurable kindness God wants to bestow.

Here (v8–9) is one of the New Testament's greatest statements of what God's evangelistic purpose is all about.

*Spirit of God,
Lord and Giver of Life,
Moving between us and around like wind or water or fire;
Breathe into us your freshness that we may awake;
Cleanse our vision that we may see more clearly;
Kindle our senses that we may feel more sharply;
And give us the courage to live
As you would have us live
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

John V Taylor

M

Next week our partner organisation in Afghanistan celebrates 40 years of faithful service to the Afghan people. We rejoice at past achievements and pray for all their workers as they seek culturally and personally to be even more relevant in the future.

T

The Rev Nick Hall of Kairos Media Trust helps local churches in Central Asia to produce evangelistic videos and DVDs in local languages. He hopes to launch a training project in Tajikistan soon so people can learn translation skills for dubbing.

W

Russian Orthodox Church Head of Mission Archbishop Ioann of Belgorod will meet Alpha course representatives next week to discuss an 'Orthodox Alpha' office in Moscow. He hopes the innovative move will result in many more coming to Christ.

T

Today mission partners Geoff and Gill Kimber in Romania welcome Keith Parr, youth minister at Coventry Cathedral, who is spending the next five days building links with the Lord's Army, Romania's Orthodox renewal movement.

F

Archbishop Andrei Andreicut and his dedicated staff continue ground-breaking attempts to prepare the Romanian Orthodox Church for the culture shock of integration in Europe. He needs the gift of wisdom as do Geoff and Gill Kimber as they work with him.



CMS mission partners in Romania Geoff and Gill Kimber.

WEEK 3

21 – 27 MAY

WEEKEND FOCUS

GOD'S GENTILE HEIRS

Read Ephesians 2:11–22

Christianity began as a Jewish movement but quickly broke out to embrace Gentiles. There was a literal wall. Gentiles seeking after God by visiting the Temple in Jerusalem were left in no doubt about their status. A dividing wall kept them at a distance.

The death of Christ has annulled once-for-all the state of war between Jew and Gentile. All the external signs pointing up the differences are abolished. There is no apartheid, no iron curtain.

Think of what this the change of status meant for Gentiles. Previously they were aliens and strangers with no hope (v12). Now in Christ they have been brought near to God (v13).

Pray this week that the same subversive spirit that powered the early mission to the Gentiles will do its work today.

*A candle is a protest at midnight.
It says to the darkness,
I beg to differ.*

Indian Proverb

M

In Rwanda, the Rural Development Inter-Diocesan Service, led by Fashaho Aloys, supports church development projects and holds workshops on reconciliation. Scripture Union, led by Jean-Baptiste Bugirwenda, takes the Gospel to schoolchildren.

T

Rwanda's Solace Ministries, led by Jean Gakwandi, counsels widows and orphans dealing with the effects of AIDS and the genocide and helps them to set up self-help groups. Similar work is done in Byumba Diocese by Josephine Rwaje and Venantie.

W

Mission partners Wim and Bertha Schoonbee at Gahini hospital in Rwanda praise God for showing his grace in changing lives like young Chantal's. "After plastic surgery to reconstruct her nose she can face the world now and give the praises to God!"

T

In south-west Uganda, the Rev Stephen Tirwomwe leads mission work in Kigezi Diocese. Mission partner Jenny Green works with young people and children in Muhabura Diocese and has a major project to build a children's crisis centre in Kisoro.

F

During the Archbishop of Canterbury's positive visit to Sudan, he highlighted the need for a just distribution of resources from the country's oil, so that equality and peace stand a chance. Pray for CMS's role with the Church in rebuilding society.



UGANDA

DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC
OF CONGO

Ruhengeri

Byumba

RWANDA

Kigali

Gahini

Shyogwe

Kibungo

Kigeme

Butare

BURUNDI

WEEK 4

28 MAY – 3 JUNE

WEEKEND FOCUS

PRAY WITH THE BIBLE

Read Ephesians 3:1–13

Here is a further instalment of the earlier prayer (from 1:15) where the writer marvels at the greatness of God's power. This power that raised Christ from the dead has brought new life to Gentiles who were dead in their sinful state (v1–10). See if you can shape it into a prayer of praise using contemporary language.

You could make it a personal prayer of thanksgiving for what God has done for you. You may want to see how it might help you pray for the people and places you meet this week in **PRAYERLINES**.

Preserve us from selfishness, stinginess and indifference, give us instead a joyful spirit of giving and a readiness to support eagerly the work of missions. Bless the preaching of the Gospel and stir up the hearts of people everywhere so that they will be restless without you. Hear us for your mercy's sake, O Lord.

A Lutheran prayer

M

Jason and Tracy Day are mission partners at the Tansen Nursing School in Nepal, and new parents to daughter Ruby. Tracy recently finished maternity leave and is adjusting to a new schedule. They ask prayer for safety as Nepal remains tense.

T

The arsenic crisis in Bangladesh may receive more attention this month as a lawsuit against the British Geological Survey is heard in the House of Lords. Currently 29 – 80 million people are at risk of arsenic poisoning from unacceptable levels in drinking water.

W

Paul and Ina Watson, along with their daughters, Abi and Hannah, serve in Kandy, Sri Lanka, where among several other things, they are working to raise awareness of the need for care for the elderly and continue in post-tsunami work.

T

Mizoram, one of the smallest states in India, is a community of 800,000 people, 95 per cent of whom are Christians. Inspired by their passion for mission, CMS and the Mizoram Presbyterian Church are to jointly send mission workers in India and beyond.

F

Pam Cooper has been a mission partner in Japan since 1968. She asks prayer for the daily 15-minute chapel services at Poole Gakuin University where she is Chaplain, and her regular Bible study in English; most women who come are not Christians.

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**.

May is a month of paperwork as Relocation Manager Gillian Wilcox seeks contractors to carry out the refit of the new offices, and inspiration among staff and others for an interior design that combines a functional and spiritual aesthetic.

CMS is working out new ethical and environmental policies to ensure our core values are lived out in our purchasing decisions related to the new buildings and the ongoing needs of the Society. Please pray for wisdom for all involved in the process.

The time is drawing near for CMS staff to make a commitment to work for CMS after the Oxford move, or to decide to move on. Do lift them up in prayer as they weigh up the implications of this serious decision.

PRAYERLINES is produced by the Church Mission Society,
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Registered Charity Number 220297

**A father
to the
fatherless,
a defender
of widows,
is God...**