



PRAYERLINES

MAY 2007



| *sharing Jesus, changing lives*



'Indonesian Crucifix' by Bagong Kussudiardja

PRAYERLINES



“God never gives us discernment in order that we may criticise, but that we may intercede.”

Oswald Chambers

CMS is a community of people who have very strong convictions and this shouldn't be a surprise. Mission is a challenging calling. It requires mental and spiritual robustness. It's not just people in frontline mission service who need this. It takes a lot of mentoring and sacrifice on the part of a lot of people to get a single individual into mission work. It takes a lot of focus, creativity, and sheer stick-ability to keep the claims of mission before seemingly reluctant churches.

So it shouldn't be a surprise that occasionally some of us will discern ways to do things better. Most of the letters and emails I receive about Prayerlines are full of encouragement and I rejoice in it. Occasionally, however, someone will justifiably want to take issue with us. When that happens we all have a choice: to criticise or to discern another avenue for intercession.

Please don't let anything become an excuse to stop praying for mission.

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

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WEEK 1

28 APRIL – 4 MAY

WEEKEND FOCUS

God our Light

Saturday: Read Isaiah 60:19–20

Here is well-being in pure form. Again words that sound familiar. The writer of the Book of Revelation had them in mind when painting a word-picture of the celestial city where both sun and moon are redundant because the light of God is all in all. For the exiles it was right to bask in hope at the prospect of a restored Jerusalem. As Christians we know that no human-based system can deliver. We will always look beyond. Our task: to proclaim the rule of God and pray for its coming.

Sunday: Read Isaiah 60:21–22

Here Israel is invited to move on from a story of slavery and oppression to one of hope and joyous expectation. As we have hinted already, Christians will feel somewhat uncomfortable with this vision of the future. There's a huge hint that things may not turn out as expected. God may not do his will our way. His purpose is not that his people should have an inside track on wealth and well-being. It is "so that I might be glorified" (verse 21). And that is why we pray for mission.

M

We are thrilled that the CMS-commissioned play *African Snow* has added to its tour a two-week run at a high-profile West End theatre – The Trafalgar Studios, Whitehall, London: Tuesday–Saturday (24–28 April); Monday–Saturday (30 April–5 May).

T

African Snow will also be at the following venues in May: 22–23 Clwyd Theatr Cymru, Mold, 24–25 Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham and 29 May – 2 June Hackney Empire in London. Please pray for a good turnout at all these events.

W

Last month the fundraising team asked for prayer for their efforts. Praise God for the success of the recent funding application to one of the Sainsbury Family Trusts. The Trust has committed to support CMS work with the Church of Burundi for three years.

T

The team asks for continued prayer as they endeavour to forge possible fundraising links between CMS and a number of large trusts. Pray that people would be inspired to give towards mission around the world and in the UK.

F

After several enjoyable, refreshing months in the UK, CMS mission partners Bob and Rosalind Arnold are returning to Uganda to continue their work with the Bungokho Rural Development Centre. Give thanks for their good time here and pray for their re-entry.



Mission partners Ros and Bob Arnold (week 1)

WEEK 2

5 – 11 MAY

WEEKEND FOCUS

God's Anointed

Saturday: Read Isaiah 61:1–2

More words with a very familiar ring. When Jesus announces his mission manifesto in Nazareth (Luke 4:16–18) he turns to this passage. And what a mission agenda. It has it all: proclamation, healing, liberation and jubilee. It is holistic. It puts wrongs right. When all this is accomplished we will find it has touched the deepest part of humanity and transformed it. Use this as a keynote for your prayers this week. That God's anointed one will continue his work in and through the people in mission for whom we pray. That the places where they work will be transformed as the Gospel does its work.

Sunday: Read Isaiah 61:3–4

In these verses Isaiah spells out what the impact of mission of the Lord's anointed will be. A series of rich contrasting images describes the radical change it brings about. Use these images to pray for a person you know who's engaged in mission or a particular place that cries out for the kind of transformation these images express: a garland instead of ashes; the oil of gladness instead of mourning; a mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

M

The Christian Resources Exhibition is taking place from 15 to 18 May. Representatives from CMS will be there, helping people focus on the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade and issues of modern day slavery.

T

Daniel and Verni Niles, with Emmett, Jason, and Anna Ruth are beginning their second term of service as mission partners serving at Uganda Christian University. Daniel is praying that he will continue to be an asset to the faculty.

W

Chris Neal, Mission Movement Director, is leading a session for the Mission Shaped Ministry course on Saturday 12 May. This is part of the training provided by Chelmsford Diocese for people interested in leading fresh expressions of church.

T

Chris Neal is also preaching at St James and All Saints Gloucester on the morning of Sunday 13 May. On Saturday 19 May Chris is meeting with members of Dudley Deanery to help them plan a mission action strategy. Pray that this would be fruitful.

F

On 19 May Norfolk CMS Association is holding an event to highlight the situation for Christian minority communities in the Middle East. The speaker is Ian Smith, CMS North Team Leader, who will develop the theme of his book, *A Case of Confidence*.

WEEK 3

12 – 18 MAY

WEEKEND FOCUS

God's Reward

Saturday: Read Isaiah 61:4–7

The prospect of return from exile prompts the writer to wax lyrical about what life will be like. Devastation makes way for well-being and prosperity. The people of Israel will be set apart as priests and ministers of God. But that's a mission Israel always struggled to fulfil. We know how, in Christ, God had something even better in mind. He calls us to share both the mission and the benefits it brings. Use the last two words of the passage "everlasting joy" as a prayer theme. That it will be a reality in your life, in the lives of the mission partners for whom we pray and for the nations and peoples with whom they work.

Sunday: Read Isaiah 61:8–11

The relationship between God and Israel is viewed as a marriage. It's a theme that runs right through the Scriptures and concludes with the Book of Revelation's vision of the holy city adorned as the bride of the Lamb. The hero and heroine may have had ups and downs but finally a marriage is celebrated. We are joined in this sacred covenant, destined to live in loving communion with our God forever. Use this theme to pray that people everywhere will hear God's loving invitation.



Dr Lalita Edwards, co-mission partner, Pune, India

M

Alison Fletcher, mission partner at Kiwoko Hospital in Uganda, has undertaken a project, looking into the needs of the local disabled population. She reports, “It has been enlightening to visit disabled people in their homes, interview them and hear their stories.”

T

Please pray for Katie Hart, as she ends her time of mission partner service. Praise God for the relationships she was able to build in China and pray that God would guide her as she determines her future direction in the coming months.

W

Mission partners Michael and Rachel Duff, with Emily and James, have been in Indonesia for three and a half years and are returning to the UK this spring. Pray that their last few months with CMS will be productive and their transition will be smooth.

T

Jane Shaw, co-mission partner in Raiwind Diocese in Pakistan, is grateful for recent answers to prayer, including the provision of a long-term visa, improvement in her understanding and usage of Urdu and increasing opportunities to be involved.

F

Dr Lalita Edwards, co-mission partner in India, is grateful for a new facility for Santvana Home for children. Near the home is a fairly large slum where at least 60 children are in need of care during the day. Pray as the team tries to meet this need.

WEEK 4

19 – 25 MAY

WEEKEND FOCUS

God the bridegroom

Saturday: Read Isaiah 62:1–5

Have you noticed a change in the way God addresses Israel in recent readings? This passage makes it explicit: God has given his people new names and they are feminine. Once they were known as Azubah (forsaken) or Shemamah (desolate). Now the people are named Hephzibah (my delight is in her) and the land Beulah (married).

So what is God's purpose here? Jesus invited us to relate to God as *abba* (father) but centuries before we have an inkling of how the Lord wants intimacy with the people he loves. Mission is part of the outpouring of God's love.

Sunday: Read Isaiah 62:6–9

Matthew Henry writes of this passage: "God's professing people must be a praying people. He is not displeased with us for being earnest ... He bids us to cry after him, and give him no rest." Not everyone will have the gifts of strength and temperament to pray thus. There may, however, be situations and themes that call for something extra.

Can you think of a theme for intercession where you might be willing to pray in this way?



Liz and Rob Watson, Luke, Joe, Ben, JJ and friend in Sudan (week 4, Friday)

M

Bertha and Wim Schoonbee, mission partners serving at Gahini Hospital in Rwanda, are on leave in the UK until July. They are thankful for a good rainy season and a good harvest and ask that you keep blind people in Rwanda in prayer.

T

Angela and Chris Chorlton, with Anna and Isaac, are mission partners in Egypt. They are grateful for new doors that have opened within their church for ministry (youth, engaged couples, mums and tots) and for their friends and supporters.

W

Many non-government organisations (NGOs) are pulling out of southern Sudan, believing that the time of 'disaster relief response' is over. Pray for the despair settling into the hearts of the local people left behind and for infrastructure to be strengthened.

T

In many areas in Sudan people are too traumatised to have the energy and hope to rebuild their communities. Pray that the church may be the source of God's new life, strength and hope, though many church leaders are still traumatised too.

F

Give thanks for the huge impact of the Episcopal Church of Sudan education programme headed by mission partner Rob Watson, now being helped by mission partner Robbie Langford and for the King's Kids programme running in many Sudanese schools.

WEEK 5

26 MAY – 1 JUNE

WEEKEND FOCUS

God who Redeems

Saturday: Read Isaiah 62:10–12

This passage seems to be a remix of Isaiah 40. God's people, Israel, are coming home. The city once forsaken will be re-inhabited and the people who return will live to love and serve their God. Here is a passage that is "filled-full" by viewing it from a post-resurrection perspective. A strong message here is that having begun his work to redeem humanity, God will complete it fully. Not surprisingly Christians have seen in these words a picture of another Coming to anticipate with hope, a time when judgement is meted out and good rewarded. Pray his Kingdom will come.

Sunday: Read Isaiah 63:7–9

This passage reads like a Psalm and it celebrates God's steadfast love (Hebrew *hesed*). We can intercede ceaselessly because God's capacity for loving response knows no limit. When his people have suffered God has suffered with them (verse 9) and it is out of God's deep compassion that his redemptive work flows. Think of a situation in today's world where it could be said that God is being afflicted as he sees the afflictions of his people. Thank God that he is ready to heal and renew.



Mission partners Caroline and Dick Seed

M

Louise and Tino Singodia have been accepted as mission partners-in-training and will be discussing plans for the future. They are currently considering India. Tino has been working with the CMS Finance Team for the past three years.

T

Please pray for the difficult process of reunification between North and South Korea. Pray in particular for the Korean Council of Churches led by the Primate of the Anglican Church in Korea, which is working relentlessly to bring about peace initiatives.

W

Caroline and Dick Seed at Kigali Anglican Theological College in Rwanda ask for prayer for the health needs of staff and students as it's malaria season. They sleep under nets but it is difficult to avoid every bite when out in the evenings.

T

Emma Johnson, volunteering at St John's Seminary in Kitwe, Zambia gives thanks to God for the students: "...*they are just so amazing and wonderful, wonderful people*"; and for the good relationships between students and lecturers.

F

CMS will be moving its London offices to Oxford in a few weeks. Please see more about this in Prayer Focus, and pray for project manager Gillian Wilcox as she co-ordinates the move, that God would give her strength and wisdom and patience.

MISSION BACKGROUND

CMS IN EGYPT

Christians form about 10 per cent of the population of Egypt and more Christians live in Egypt than the rest of the Middle East. It contains sites that are 'holy ground' to Jews, Muslims and Christians.

CMS sent FA Klein to Cairo in 1882. He joined forces with a Miss Whately working among the poor of Cairo. Together they opened a reading room and further women missionaries continued this work.

Work took a new direction when William Temple Gairdner went to Cairo in 1899. Gairdner's linguistic abilities enabled a remarkable dialogue with Muslims. He once wrote: "We need a song note in our message to the Muslims, not the dry cracked note of disputation, but the song note of joyous witness, tender invitation." Gairdner used music and drama, poetry and pictures, journalism and debate to present Christianity. He founded a publishing house with *Orient and Occident* magazine its flagship venture.

Dr Frank Harpur from Ireland began medical work in 1888 in the Nile Delta and Harpur Memorial Hospital continues his work. The Egyptian President Bishop in Jerusalem and the Middle East, the Most Rev Mouneer Anis is a former medical director. The Episcopal Church has an effective partnership with the Coptic Church for relating to Muslims and links with CMS Australia, CMS Britain and CMS Ireland.

PRAYER FOCUS

CMS IS MOVING TO OXFORD

Here are the latest items for prayer as the London office of CMS prepares to move to Oxford in June.

Barring unforeseen circumstances, the move from Partnership House in London to CMS House in Oxford will take place from 13 to 19 June 2007, with 19 June being the first day of work in the new office.

The library is set to move at the end of May, so please pray that all materials out on loan will be returned by that time. Pray for our library staff as they endeavour to recover these borrowed items.

Please pray for clarity of communication among all staff as regards the move, that everyone would work together in a spirit of unity and co-operation.

Praise God for new staff who will be starting in Oxford and pray for all of us as we say goodbye to those who will not be relocating. Continue to pray for those who are looking for new employment.

Thank you so much for all of your prayers during this time of transition. Below is our new postal address and telephone number, which you can start using straight away.

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Preserve
me, O
God, for
I take
refuge in
you