



PRAYERLINES

NOVEMBER 2006



| *sharing Jesus, changing lives*



Aboriginal cross, Australia

PRAYERLINES



**“Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work.”
Oswald Chambers**

You will notice a couple of changes to PRAYERLINES and more ‘tweaks’ are in the pipeline, thanks to a review undertaken just a couple of days before this month’s copy deadline.

We are indebted to hundreds of readers for their constructive comments. Some have asked if we can strengthen the Weekend Focus so there is something for every day. We hope in the future to go a bit deeper, with background information about places and peoples where we work.

We recognise, too, a need to be more ‘joined up’ between our various CMS campaigns and our intercession. Next year, for example, we mark the bicentenary of Wilberforce’s Bill abolishing the slave trade and that reminds us that slavery is still alive and growing in our day.

That’s a huge prayer agenda.

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WEEK 1

29 OCTOBER – 4 NOVEMBER

WEEKEND FOCUS

GOD THE KINGMAKER

Saturday: Read Isaiah 45:1–6

Royal decrees pop up from time to time in the Old Testament, with God speaking directly to a King, spelling out a mandate for action. There's a great example in Psalm 2: God addresses David, promises power, wealth and territory and adopts him as a son.

Here God addresses a gentile potentate, Cyrus the Persian. There's a shock in store. Not only is Cyrus appointed for an important task, he's hailed as God's 'anointed', the Messiah, in the succession of David.

So Israel is to be served by a nobody and likewise a nobody from Nazareth will one day come as great David's greater Son to be the agent of the victory of God. It's the supreme model for the work of mission and for all for whom we pray this week.

Sunday: Read Isaiah 45:7

Use this doxology as a prayer for evangelistic mission and justice today.

M

The first Free For All performance since the Greenbelt festival is scheduled for 4 November at Holy Trinity Clapham. Please keep CMS, Big Intent and all the children involved in your prayers and ask that the audience would be moved by the message.

T

On 30 November CMS trustee Penny Minney is organising a concert evening featuring the Durham Singers at Auckland Castle, Durham. It's in aid of CMS projects caring for orphans in Russia. (Details from pennyminney@onetel.com or 0191 3711295.)

W

The Durham concert will benefit an order of nuns in Moscow who, with help from CMS, care for girl orphans. This has been an especially difficult year and they are in need of support. Pray that those who come will give generously, and pray for the work.

T

CMS recognises that the world is connected in so many ways today, but global and local mission are often placed in separate boxes. The Mission Movement team is working on resources for individuals and churches to integrate their mission.

F

The courses and resources are designed to strengthen discipleship within local mission that's globally connected, to celebrate people's gifts and skills, and to encourage enthusiasts for mission. Some materials should be available early in 2007.



Kate and Tim Lee with Rebekah, James and Grace, Philippines

WEEK 2

5 – 11 NOVEMBER

WEEKEND FOCUS

GOD THE SOVEREIGN

Saturday: Read Isaiah 45:9–13

Why the change of mood? Up to now it's all been new beginnings: a new Messiah, a future and a hope. Perhaps there's been news of a reaction from the exiles. "Cyrus? A gentile Messiah? Thanks but no thanks!"

Whatever, God is angry and hurt, like a parent whose rebellious child retorts, "I didn't ask to be born!" The response in a nutshell is "How dare you!" In verses 11–13, God meets the objectors with a ferocious riposte. Know your place, I am the Creator: you are the creature. Know my purposes: I will be what I will be and I will carry out what I have set out to do. Watch my lips: Cyrus will rebuild my city.

Sometimes it seems the work of God is being stalled by human opposition. Claim the promise that God's purposes are sure and his will prevails forever on behalf of all for whom you pray this week.

Sunday: Read Isaiah 45:17

Use this passage to form a prayer that sums up the ultimate purpose of the mission of God.

M ReSource is a creative church planting initiative supported by an inter-denominational partnership of organisations and churches, including CMS. On 23 and 25 November ReSource will host training and networking days in Chichester and Manchester.

T Praise God for Kate and Tim Lee and their Jigsaw Ministries (see **MISSIONUPDATE**), which has arisen in response to the vast needs of thousands of street children in Manila, and which has employed and empowered local people to care for these children.

W Please continue praying for policy makers in Thailand and specifically the city of Bangkok, and for Jane Lee and Gail Phillip's safety and protection in times of potential social unrest. Continue to pray for Shelagh Wynne and her ministry in Chiang Mai.

T Do remember the residents of Thailand whose livelihood could be adversely affected by the political uncertainties. And also pray for peace to return to South Thailand, especially after the bombing in the province of Hat Yai.

F Praise God for visa approval for Katherine and Tony Paton in Indo-China after a long waiting period and do continue to pray for their family, the ministry, language study and weekly English teaching sessions with their students.



Jane Lee and friend Tan (see **MISSIONUPDATE**)

WEEK 3

12 – 18 NOVEMBER

WEEKEND FOCUS

GOD COMMANDS

Saturday: Read Isaiah 45:22–23

Here's the Gospel in a nutshell. But this is no polite invitation: it's a command. A summons. About turn. Face the opposite way. Nor is it simply addressed to Isaiah's immediate hearers. It's a Gospel for the entire earth. These words are picked up by New Testament writers: compare Romans 14:11 or Philippians 2:8–11. Here is another glimpse of God's ultimate purpose.

There is no escaping the intent of the writers, but it's a huge challenge for us today. We're not told how exactly it will happen, but the expectation is that there will come a day when every Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, every follower of any religion, every atheist and agnostic, will bow the knee to Christ. That, surely, leaves us no doubt about the imperative of evangelistic mission. Pray for the work of mission among people of other faiths.

Sunday: Read Isaiah 46:3

Use this passage to compose a prayer of thanksgiving that God provides all that is needed for the good life. And that he will take care of all for whom we pray this week.

M Mission Movement Director Chris Neal and others will be at a missional leaders conference in Nairobi from 10–21 November. Please pray for people attending as they share insights and learn from one another during this time.

T Please pray for all participants in the Mid-Africa Conference at Swanwick 24–26 November. The returning Praxis Rwanda group, led by Ian and Carol Smith, will be meeting on that Friday at Swanwick to reflect on their overseas experience and share it.

W Please pray for the congregation of St Peter's Anglican Cathedral in Dutse, the capital of Jigawa State in Northern Nigeria. The cathedral, as well as quite a few other churches, was severely burnt a couple of months ago by arsonists.

T Candidates to become CMS mission partners, and their interviewers, are getting ready to attend the residential selection conference taking place on the weekend of 17–19 November. Pray for God's leading and wisdom for all involved.

F Please pray for wisdom and clarity to be given to all those returning from People in Mission programmes, who will attend the re-entry conference, also on 17–19 November. Those organising these important conferences also appreciate your prayers.



WEEK 4

19 – 25 NOVEMBER

WEEKEND FOCUS

GOD WITHOUT EQUAL

Saturday: Read Isaiah 46:5–7

We have seen this theme before from Isaiah 40 onwards. Now the writer turns on the gods of Babylon. List in your mind the points the prophet makes about the futility of all this creative endeavour.

But wait a minute. Before we smirk too widely we need to look at our own society. What are the gods of our world that so easily blind our minds and make us turn away from serving the true and living God? What guidance can we find here for living a mission lifestyle that resists the lure of the false gods around us? How can this inform us to pray for people in mission who daily engage the powers of darkness?

Sunday: Read Isaiah 46:12

Use these words to pray for release from timidity in mission.

M

For Sudan, pray for the stabilising of a rocky peace in the south. People are getting frustrated at the lack of visible development, and local tensions are disrupting some areas, says CMS regional manager Pauline Walker.

T

The president of Southern Sudan, Salva Kiir, issued a “200-day Action Plan” to bring services to the south: roads, clean water, health facilities, schools, and telecommunications. Pray for the resources, skills and organisational ability to make this happen.

W

Mission partner Trisha Wick is helping the Episcopal Church of Sudan get organised for a nationwide Theological Education by Extension programme. Pray for the integration of this and all the theological training, to meet the enormous need in Sudan.

T

A new course has started at Carlile College in Nairobi, Kenya, to train eight Sudanese church leaders over four years to become trainers in mission, evangelism, discipleship, management, development, conflict resolution and more.

F

Each year the students will spend eight months at college and four back in Sudan training others so that eventually 900 people will be equipped to lead. Prayer is needed for effective translation into local languages of the materials they will use.

WEEK 5

26 NOVEMBER – 2 DECEMBER

WEEKEND FOCUS

GOD THE HERALD

Saturday: Read Isaiah 48:6–11

Isaiah is fond of speaking of “the former things”. We can only guess he means the suffering and pain that Israel endured as the Babylonians ravaged their land and carried their young people into exile. But he wants to bring a message of new things, of deliverance and hope.

God always longed to herald this message but at times he held back because of Israel’s treachery and idolatry. And there is the human tendency, in which we all share, to twist these ‘new things’ so they are corrupted and spoiled (verse 8). We do it all the time.

Pray that you and the people for whom you intercede will be protected from this.

Sunday: Read Isaiah 48:12–13

These words to tell us more of the One to whom we pray. Use them to frame your prayer for God’s mission.

M Please pray for Felipe and Sarah Yáñez, CMS and South American Mission Society mission partners currently studying subjects concerning Europe, Catholicism, Islam and spiritual development at Redcliffe College in preparation for serving in Spain.

T Barbara Williams has concluded her time as a mission partner in Sri Lanka, and asks for prayer as she determines her future plans, as well as for Sri Lanka, that the people there would experience political stability and peace.

W Malcolm and Veronica White are CMS mission partners in Jordan at the English-speaking congregation of the Anglican Church in Jordan. Among their prayer requests are for deeper relationships with other, Arab Anglican parishes.

T Debbie and Hugh Skeil have worked at Christian Medical College in Vellore, South India, since 1999. Debbie is a doctor and Hugh has served as accountant and helped revamp the IT systems. Praise God their visas have been renewed.

F Prayer is needed for Michael and Sarah Puttick with children Alex, Caragh and Maire as they come to the end of their language and orientation programme with United Mission to Nepal and start their work with Tansen Hospital.



Mission partners Debbie and Hugh Skeil in Vellore, India

PRAYER FOCUS

CMS IS MOVING TO OXFORD

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

During September and October, all teams solidified plans for recruitment of new staff and handing over work during the transition from London to Oxford. Please pray for office morale as some staff leave and those remaining take on extra work in the interim.

Now that building works have started, please pray that we will have vision and creativity as we turn our attention to interior design.

As CMS is a storehouse for over 200 years of mission history books, photographs and various documents, please pray that our archives will be protected and preserved during this process.

Progress is being made towards a mission community in East Oxford as we develop relationships and discover opportunities and needs in the neighbourhood. Positive interest from people locally and further afield is contributing to the CMS vision.

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A PRAYER EXERCISE

REVISIT THIN PLACES

The Celtic Church was fond of speaking of 'thin places', where the gap between heaven and earth was very narrow. They even said there were times and places when heaven and earth actually met.

Celtic spirituality encouraged people to visit 'thin' locations: islands, mountains, springs and wells. Some of them became associated with particular saints or holy persons. Sometimes these visits took on a seasonal rhythm. People might be encouraged to join an annual pilgrimage to the site. Iona, off the Scottish coast, and Holy Island off the Northumbria coast are two famous examples, but there are many more, not least in Cornwall and the West Country.

There's no need to be confined to established places. You may have a place in your home and garden that's become a 'thin' place. You may have had a special experience of the presence of God in a church or by the seaside.

Make a list of 'thin places' from different episodes in your life. Consider re-visiting one of them.

You may simply prefer to revisit them in your imagination. It may help to use Scripture passages or stories of other visitors to the place.

**To them
he gave
the right to
become
children of
God**