



PRAYERLINES

OCTOBER 2006



| *sharing Jesus, changing lives*



'Rasta Jesus', unknown artist

PRAYERLINES



“Study your prayers; a great part of my time is spent getting in tune for prayer.” Robert Murray McCheyne

Recently the rock star Mick Jagger revealed that for the first time ever he was having singing lessons. The legendary lead singer of The Rolling Stones has been in action since 1962 without any professional help. Now after 35 years he’s found he needs help warming up for concerts.

There is an important principle here that applies to prayer. No matter how great our natural prayer gifts may be, there will almost certainly come a time when our prayer life will benefit from something fresh and new from beyond our personal resources. That is when the study of the art of prayer, even warming up for prayer, comes into its own.

Some of you will be familiar with the use of icons. For those who are not, I hope you will find our exercise about praying with icons (page 19) offers a new dimension as you pray for persons and places this month.

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

1 – 7 OCTOBER

WEEKEND FOCUS

GOD CALLS WITNESSES

Read Isaiah 43:8–13

One way missionaries used to try to show that local pagan deities had no life or power was set up a power encounter. Adherents were challenged to call on their god to perform a powerful act. When it failed to materialise the implication was clear.

The Bible's most famous power encounter was between Elijah with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18). We have echoes of this here. God calls on the peoples to be witnesses. No god existed before him. No god will come after (verse 10). So the implication is clear. God only is the saviour (verse 11).

Being confident about this is the springboard for our prayers for mission.

*God is the most high, to whom none can attain,
But he became humble among us.*

*God is the untouchable fire:
But we saw him and felt him,
And ate and drank with him.*

From the Ethiopian Orthodox Church

M

MUKA (Most United Knowledgeable Artists) is a group of young, formerly homeless South African performers using creative arts to raise awareness of homelessness and reach young people. From 6–14 October they will work in London, Herts and Suffolk.

T

On 19 and 26 October CMS will hold Tools and Training Days for Mission Movement co-workers in London and Tewkesbury. We are so thankful for these wonderful volunteers who give so generously of their time and talents.

W

The CMS Members' Day being held at Partnership House on 28 October is an opportunity for members to catch up on CMS news around the world and contribute to developing a vision for the future. May it be a blessing to all who attend.

T

CMS Mission Adviser for the North, Colin Darling, is thankful for another successful sponsored four-day Coast to Coast cycle ride from Whitehaven to Tynemouth that raised up to £4,000 for the Nejat drug rehabilitation project in Afghanistan.

F

There's a meeting of CMS Mid-Africa supporters in Liverpool on 23 October, with speaker Ian Smith. Speaking of speaking, CMS Mission Movement Director Chris Neal has several engagements this month for which he'd appreciate prayer.



MUKA (Most United Knowledgeable Artists) in action. Photo: Andreas Weise/CMS

WEEK 2

8 – 14 OCTOBER

WEEKEND FOCUS

GOD THE ROCK

Read Isaiah 44:1–8

Try to jot down all the promises of God set out in this passage. Israel is the people of God's choice (verse 1). It was known by God even before it was born. Therefore there is no reason whatever to fear (verse 2).

Try to imagine the refreshment of cool water in a dusty, hot desert. Try to imagine dry land before and after refreshing rain as shoots spring up and desert flowers appear. Try to imagine the safety of a rock fortress.

Now use these themes as you pray for the people on our prayer list this week: that they will feel confident in their calling. That they will be refreshed and be a source of refreshment. That will be assured that God is their rock and protector.

*God to enfold me, God to surround me,
God in my speaking, God in my thinking.
God in my life, God in my lips,
God in my hands, God in my heart.*

A Celtic Prayer

M

CMS will be represented when the Archbishop of Canterbury visits China from 8 to 23 October. This will be Dr Williams' first visit to China and there will be opportunities to interact with Chinese leaders and people from various sectors of society.

T

Pray for the newly opened CMS base in Seoul, Korea, which is building working relationships with the well-established mission fraternity there. One immediate focus is on equipping Korean Anglicans to work with the Anglican Church in Japan.

W

A major peace conference and proposed visit to North Korea scheduled for this year is sadly postponed due to the increasing tension in the region, and the postponement of this event highlights the need for greater vigilance and prayer.

T

Asian Outreach, CMS's partner in the Action Love alliance celebrates 40 years of faithful ministry in Asia with a Celebration Event in Shanghai from 16 to 21 October. CMS has been invited to share in this celebration of thanksgiving and recommitment.

F

Chye Ann Soh, CMS East Asia Director, continues to provide leadership for our work in East Asia as well as pioneering business as mission initiatives at the same time. Remember too all our mission partners in this diverse region.



Simon Na, CMS Regional Co-ordinator, North-East Asia. Photo: CMS

WEEK 3

15 – 21 OCTOBER

WEEKEND FOCUS

THE TRUE GOD

Read Isaiah 44:12–20

In earlier passages God has called witnesses to reinforce his credentials as the only saviour. Now the blow torch is turned on the opposition. No passage in the Bible heaps more scorn on idols and those who make them. Idols are nothing less than frauds. Here is Jewish apologetics at its most vigorous.

Mission history tells us, however, that while outright confrontation might win arguments, it may not win hearts and minds. So as well as praying that the people in mission we remember this week will be confident in their faith, pray that their work and witness will include building good relationships.

*Almighty God,
the Great Thumb we cannot evade to tie any knot;
the roaring Thunder that splits mighty trees:
the all-seeing Lord up on high who sees even the footprints of
antelope on a rock mass here on Earth.
You are the one who does not hesitate to respond to our call.
You are the cornerstone of peace.*

Assisi Prayers

M

CMS partner ISAAC, the International Substance Abuse and Addiction Coalition, is hosting an international congress in Egypt, 15–20 October. The central theme will be the relationship between substance misuse and HIV/AIDS.

T

Please pray that the delegates from churches, rehab centres, prevention agencies, 'street' projects and other Christian professionals working in this field will feel renewed in their commitment and inspired to network and build upon their already great work.

W

trax16 is the new monthly CMS podcast for young Christians from CMS. Please pray that trax16 will encourage an authentic community of people who are committed to mission locally and globally and growing as disciples.

T

Please continue to pray that many churches and individuals will want to get involved with the CMS Setting Captives Free programme of events in 2007, and that a united effort of caring people will eventually eradicate slavery in all its modern forms.

F

Colin Conroy, from Christian Conservation organisation A Rocha in Lebanon, is a CMS Salt participant. He and his team are in the UK until Christmas and ask for prayer for peace in Lebanon and protection for their wetlands project.

WEEK 4

22 – 28 OCTOBER

WEEKEND FOCUS

GOD THE SOVEREIGN LORD

Read Isaiah 44:21–28

Up to now the identity of the Servant is somewhat veiled. Now the writer spells it out. Israel is the Servant. It has been put right with God for a purpose. It's all very assuring. Jerusalem and the ruined towns of Judah have a future. They will be rebuilt. So will the temple.

But here's a twist. A pagan king will be God's instrument to bring all this about. Enter Cyrus. We find out more as later chapters unfold. For now, however, we come face to face with one of the mysteries of mission. God is not confined in who he will use as mission agents.

God is speaking in today's world. His voice may be mediated through unlikely instruments. Are we really listening? Pray for a listening ear and discerning mind, for yourself and all for whom you pray.

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

Oswald Chambers

M

Stephen Burgess, manager for the Mid-Africa region, asks for prayer for CMS scholarship students throughout Africa as they have begun a new term. Pray that God would give them strength in body and mind as they pursue their studies.

T

Please pray for all the staff of Neema Crafts workshop in Tanzania, which is run by CMS mission partner Susie Hart and staffed entirely by deaf and disabled people. They hope to be flooded with Christmas orders this season.

W

CMS partner United Mission to Nepal (UMN) would like to see its Oral Health Programme become a non-governmental organisation (NGO) by 2008. As this moves forward, pray for this process to be successful and for present activities to be sustained.

T

John Kafwanka, most recently CMS regional manager for Southern Africa, is taking on a new post in the Anglican Communion Office as Mission Director. He and his family are relocating to London to begin this important, challenging role.

F

Please pray for the democratic processes in DR Congo after the results of the Presidential elections were announced (20 August). Mission partner Judy Acheson says people are thankful that there will be a second round on 28 October.

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 recently conducted a Prayer Walk at the new CMS House facility, where 11 CMS members and staff blessed the building and celebrated the first Eucharist within the conference/worship space. Please pray for continuing good progress on the building work and favourable weather conditions.

We now have full occupation of the two houses in Iffley Road and are on our way towards developing a mission community house. We pray God's blessing on those now living there, and their connections in the neighbourhood.

Please continue praying for staff relocating to Oxford to find suitable housing. Prayer is needed as we recruit new people to fill the positions held by staff who won't be relocating, as well as for smooth transitions for all.

PRAYERLINES is produced by the Church Mission Society, Partnership House, 157 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8UU

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A PRAYER EXERCISE

PRAY WITH AN ICON

Henry Nouwen once commented that whereas the Western Christian tradition encourages people to listen, *gazing* is central to Eastern Christianity.

As Eastern Christians gaze at an icon they are drawn through their imagination into the eternal realm. An icon's details figuratively and symbolically point to the Kingdom of God and invite us to see beyond the immediate.

1. Light a candle before the icon.
2. Sit or stand close, at eye level.
3. Offer a prayer that expresses your desire to touch God's presence through the icon.
4. Gaze at the icon and let it gaze at you. Don't try to analyse or seek to decipher a meaning.
5. Rest your eyes on the eyes of the figure in the icon.
6. Release mistrust and judgment. Let yourself be known to God.
7. Close your eyes. Try to retain the image.
8. Rest in the presence of God.

Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, adapted

**You
are the
light
of the
world.**

Matthew 5:14