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WINTER 2020 CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY MAGAZINE

HUMILITY *in* MISSION



From the Editor



For this is what the high and exalted One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to

revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.” (Isaiah 57:15)

Perhaps that’s the verse that comforted the CMS missionaries who thought that writing an article about taking joy in their own humility (the theme of this *Checkpoint*), was a hard ask. Who wants to volunteer to write an article revealing how humble they are? Our hope is that you will be able to see just how well they have succeeded.

One of the things CMS looks for in missionaries is godly humility. In this *Checkpoint*, former CMS missionary Greg Anderson, (now Anglican Bishop of the Northern Territory) reflects frankly about recognising our privileged position in many mission locations, then suggests ways of approaching that privilege with a truly godly humility. You can read an expanded six-part version of Greg’s insights by following the link to *Checkpoint Online* at the end of his article.

Why not use some of your lockdown time to check out not only Greg’s expanded article, but other parts of *Checkpoint Online*? You will discover treasures old and new from CMS missionaries worldwide. They will help you gain insight into how to both care for missionaries, and pray for *a world that knows Jesus*.

This edition opens with a special word from CMS International Director Peter Rodgers about the CMS response to the COVID-19 situation. The rest of this edition, however, needs no special word. In this current time—and in any season—every God-given insight in these articles remains, by his grace, sharp and relevant. It is a reminder that the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus, who brings life and immortality to light, remains a gospel for yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Gordon Cheng

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CMS is a fellowship of Christian people and churches committed to global mission. We work together to set apart long-term workers who cross cultures to share the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our vision is for *a world that knows Jesus*. We aim to do this by:

- Reaching gospel-poor peoples for Christ
- Equipping Christian leaders for church and society
- Engaging churches in cross-cultural mission

More articles at:

checkpoint.cms.org.au

Help share lasting hope in the Philippines and beyond

When Filipino couple Daniel and Honeylin were saved, they wanted to learn to live God's way – but they relied on the teaching of poorly equipped church leaders.

In God's sovereignty, CMS missionaries Howard and Michelle Newby arrived at the church Daniel and Honeylin attended, and began leading the couple in a Bible study.

*"Because of the Bible study, we were able to spot false teaching... **now no one can cheat us when it comes to the truth of God's word.**" – Honeylin*

After gentle encouragement from Howard and Michelle, Daniel and Honeylin decided to study at a local Bible college, where they are now preparing to be missionaries amongst

an unreached people group in the Philippine mountains.

Praise God!

Our Lasting Hope Appeal during May and June is critical in supporting missionaries like Howard and Michelle, so that men, women and children around the world can hear God's word and be saved.

In this challenging time for our world, **will you give a special one-off gift to CMS missionaries, and help people find lasting hope in Jesus?**



Give today
lastinghope.cms.org.au

30 JUNE DEADLINE

*Left: Daniel teaching scripture
Above: Daniel and Honeylin
with Howard Newby*

A CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE



CMS International Director Peter Rodgers offers a word of encouragement about the COVID-19 situation and its impact on our missionaries and mission.

Most of the world today is in some form of self-isolation or lockdown, with shared concerns about the spread and impact of the coronavirus. This is true of almost all CMS missionaries. As this crisis worsened, the welfare of our missionaries was—and remains—of enormous importance. It was critical to bring home those in a high-risk medical category and living in contexts where medical care was limited. But most have remained on location and will have the privilege of sharing this experience alongside those whom they have gone to serve.

What impact has COVID-19 had on our mission work?

In Acts 16:16–40 we read of Paul and Silas in a much worse lockdown in prison in Philippi. Three things stand out for me that can be applied to our current situation.

Firstly, even in prison their joy could not be extinguished. “About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God” (verse 25). Paul and Silas could rejoice because they knew that Jesus still reigned, the gospel was still true and their futures still lay in the hand of a loving Father. On a superficial level things were horrible, but at a deeper level the eternal truths remained. They could rejoice. Later from another prison Paul could write, “Rejoice in the Lord always.” (Philippians 4:6)

Secondly, even while in prison, or lockdown, their ministry was not put on hold. I take enormous comfort that through this tragic story God built his church. Their imprisonment was ordained by God to build his church in Philippi through the conversion of the jailer and his household.

The CMS mission—to see *a world that knows Jesus*—is not in lockdown. God is using new circumstances, albeit tragic ones, to grow his church. From our missionaries I am hearing wonderful stories of God’s mission moving forward in unexpected and surprising ways. In Argentina, more students than ever are joining the on-line Bible study groups. In Cambodia those now unemployed and living in fear have a new openness to the message of our hope in Christ. In the

Northern Territory, Aboriginal Christians are making on-line recordings of the Kunwinjku Bible. People are coming to faith. God is growing his church. Mission is continuing around the world and we continue to be encouraged.

Thirdly, the Lord miraculously intervened and rescued Paul and Silas. We believe in a God of miracles who can unlock doors to the gospel. When Paul and Silas were released from prison, they went and immediately shared what had happened with the brothers and sisters—and all were encouraged. We are living through a difficult time but we have every reason to be encouraged. This pandemic will end, and I believe that when it does, we will see that God has been at work rescuing and saving people in new and amazing ways.

Please pray

Please pray for all our missionaries. Pray that the Lord will sustain and protect them, provide for their needs and grow them through this time. I am thankful that around the world our missionaries are in good heart, making the most of every opportunity, and rejoicing in the ways they see God at work. With our great God we have every reason for hope.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Rodgers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Read stories from missionaries who are still sharing the gospel in these times.

cms.org.au/covid



A privileged position



Former CMS missionary Greg Anderson is Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of the Northern Territory. Here he uses his personal experience to reflect on how and why CMS is so committed to approaching mission with humility.

One of the obvious things about my ministry in the Northern Territory is that my skin colour is the same as that of a lot of people, and my skin colour is different from that of many others. That's evident, yet as I thought about and wrote that first sentence, I felt uncomfortable. I have been trained to believe and know that skin colour doesn't make any difference. To even mention skin colour seems shameful. It might imply that skin colour is 'a thing'.

Yet in some parts of the world—including where CMS people are sent—not only skin colour but a range of cultural distinctives are very much a 'thing', along with other 'things' like perceived wealth, education, freedom and distinct values. For better or worse, Westerners are often seen as 'patrons'; others are often seen as 'clients'.

Patrons and clients

The unwelcome reality is that 'whitefellas' (which includes many of our ministry team working with Aboriginal people here in the Northern Territory) are almost inevitably seen as patrons, with all the implications of 'white privilege' that this can bring.

To be a 'patron' means being associated with the power and wealth of white or Western culture. If people habitually treat me—or someone from an organisation like CMS—as though we are their patrons and they are our 'clients', it raises the question of how to deal with this as Christians and as a mission organisation.

One problem is that if all the other people who look like me *are* in fact patrons, it will take a lot of work for me to convince others that I am not. The same perceptions will apply to CMS as an organisation.

One possible remedy is to explicitly raise the issue of patronage and talk with local Christians about it. Is it seen as a good or bad thing? What are its strengths and weaknesses? How do they see it displayed in the Bible? Is patronage only ever in one direction, or are there ways that it can be reciprocated? And if a person or a mission organisation is to be a patron, are there good local models of patronage that can be followed, at least until there are more opportunities to display vulnerability?

Being aware of how we are seen—including how many of us are *literally* seen because of our skin colour—will be helpful for good relationship-building in the long run.

How we're different

I have recently written a six-part series (on the CMS website¹) about some of the differences that CMS missionaries can face as Westerners in mission locations. Having considered skin colour, let's think about two other areas: money, and freedom. We want to consider how CMS missionaries (and those who support them) might approach these areas as Christians with a joyful yet humble desire to see *a world that knows Jesus*.

For better or worse, Westerners are often seen as 'patrons'; others are often seen as 'clients'.

Money

Many Australians I know not only don't see themselves as being rich, but also wouldn't want to be seen as rich by others. This would certainly apply to the sort of people who are keen supporters of the mission of CMS, who seek to be deliberately sacrificial in their approach to money and material things. Perhaps this corresponds, in part, with the Australian suspicion of tall poppies. And yet it might be that in some other parts of the world, people accept that others are wealthier. This can lead to opportunities for tapping into that wealth rather than resenting it. The reality is that if a missionary is rich in a relatively poor location, they are almost certainly going to be viewed as (at least potential) patrons.

What is a good response from a missionary or from supporters of those missionaries? One way forward is to understand how patronage works in a particular context. What are the obligations on both the patron and the client as this culture sees it? There might be a biblical critique to be brought to

¹See cms.org.au/humility-in-mission. This article is an adaptation of that series.

the system (as Paul offers in Philemon), but if we don't understand the system we can hardly engage in the critique.

I remember an Australian missionary colleague being challenged by the apparent relative opulence of missionaries from a different country, but becoming aware that on the whole, people from that country stayed on location longer than other missionaries. Perhaps they had worked out how to be good patrons, using their wealth to bring blessing to their new community. It was a cultural challenge for my friend because his own default settings were anti-wealth. That challenge can also be felt keenly by supporters of mission. Yet as this individual observed, in some cases that relative wealth can add to the ability of the missionaries concerned to minister long-term—and long-term focus is a feature of biblical mission that CMS is deeply committed to.

As we wait for the Lord to return, there may also be ways that I or others working for mission organisations can be players in changing the system for better over time, not just reiterating what is good in the current arrangements. As a missionary, finding ways to discuss openly with trusted local Christians what this might mean in practice is better than acting unilaterally. What we missionaries then do with our relative wealth (or relative poverty) is part of the discipleship that we are seeking to model as well as encouraging others to follow.

Freedom

The aspect I am reflecting on here is the level of freedom that missionaries have compared with local people.

So for example, missionaries have been able to travel from their old home to their new home. Except in emergencies such as the current Coronavirus crisis, most people are not simply stuck in the same place for their whole lives. But the ease with which people like me can generally move around would be the envy of many.

Missionaries express freedom of movement, money and time in being able to have holidays and (I hope) regular rest days. In the Western worldview, such things are regarded as necessary for sustainable ministry, not a luxury, but there are many parts of the world where local people have less flexible lifestyles. The Sabbath rest mandate is relatively rare in the world.

There are other freedoms that Western missionaries may have relative to local people. These include the ability to escape from difficulty, whether it is political, military, medical, the consequences of natural disaster or terrorism.

There are more subtle freedoms, such as the freedom that comes with wider knowledge of the world situation, achieved through good standards of education, communication and theology. There is the freedom of not really having to conform to local social mores because the missionary always remains to some extent an outsider (not to mention more powerful). In teaching my first class at Nungalinya College in 1995, I was kindly told that I would have already been killed by one of my students if I had been in his part of the world, because I had

inadvertently trespassed on his land by hanging my washing out on what I wrongly thought was a communal clothesline! I had the (unconscious) freedom to not be bound by that restriction.

Mission with humility

How can missionaries serve in effective, humble mission in contexts where, for some or much of the time, they may be in a position of 'patron', with greater freedoms and greater resources?

Recognise reality

A first step will be to recognise this reality for what it is. Speaking personally, I have learnt that we must be honest and acknowledge the tension of the position without being too hard on ourselves. A mission organisation like CMS must do likewise. It is very likely that at least some of the time, we will see our own cultural ways as superior to those who are different. At the same time, those we live and work with (who are different) may well see our ways as inferior, wrong (or at best ignorant), even ugly.

Undercut the idea that Christianity is Western

Second, we must undercut the idea that Christianity is Western. The reality of ministry across the world today is that Christianity is usually associated with the West (still). As a missionary, or as part of an organisation like CMS, I must ask what steps we are constantly taking, and what extra steps we need to take, to work against that view. This is so that people are not rejecting Jesus because Christianity is Western, or desiring Jesus because Christianity is Western. I find it an ongoing challenge and stimulus that Paul lists ethnic diversity in Colossians 3:11—Jew, Greek, 'Barbarian', Scythian—and then says that Christ is *all* as well as being in all.

Insist that each person is in the image of God

Thirdly, all Christians must continue to bear witness to the fact that each person, regardless of their ethnic origin or identity, is made in the image of God, is loved by God, and has had the way of salvation through Jesus opened up to them.

Above all, as we trust the gospel for our own salvation and the salvation of others, we must pray that God will use CMS missionaries, and CMS as a family of supporters in their weakness (and in the weakness of our supposed strengths!) to bring many people into his kingdom.



Ministry across cultures requires gospel commitment and sensitivity to local people and conditions. If you have such qualities, speak to your local CMS branch about opportunities to serve.

LEADING WITH *humility*



CMS missionary **Nathan Lovell** lectures in theology at George Whitefield College in South Africa. *Checkpoint* asked him to explain the challenges of approaching this position of authority in Christian humility.

“Can you please stop ragging on John Piper now?” ‘Ragging’ means constantly criticising someone, and my student sounded somewhat exasperated. It wasn’t true; I wasn’t ragging on John Piper. Well... I was, sort of.

The theological college where I lecture is a multi-cultural place. At any one time the student body in my college has over fifteen different nationalities from at least two, sometimes more, continents. It’s also full-time residential, which means that as everyone lives together on campus, we eat breakfast together, and overhear each other’s arguments. At the start of every year there’s an awkward period of adjustment, where everyone figures out that ‘how we do things around here’ doesn’t look like ‘how we did things at home’. Some years, the cultural issues seem to be endless.

**I want to think about pride,
especially the pride that so often
comes with authority.**

Challenging authority

One of those ‘things we do around here’ is challenge authority, so we can think for ourselves. This was why I was ‘ragging on John Piper’ as my student so eloquently put it. Piper is a popular author here, but I wasn’t trying to take him down a notch or two. I was trying to show the students something more fundamental: that it’s OK to question.

This student is from a place where challenging authority doesn’t happen, so I did it for him. Where he is from, school is done by rote-learning from the teacher. Church meant listening to what the minister told you to do. The minister listened to his bishop. As a student from that culture, it was deeply, deeply anti-intuitive for him to have the sort of conversation I wanted him to have.

This observation about authority in other cultures is common enough. You’ve probably heard similar if you’ve

read enough *Checkpoint* magazines. We need to take this observation and use it to help us in thinking about how best to teach theology across cultures.

The problem of pride

But here I want to flip it around and think about the teacher, rather than the student. Because I don’t want to reflect on authority, but on the challenge of pride.

People can become extraordinarily proud when everyone just listens to and accepts everything they say. Think about how tempting it might be for a young pastor, freshly graduated, who suddenly discovers that everyone hangs on their every opinion. Pride is a temptation for me too. I teach in a theological college, and every young pastor has to get my approval, or they don’t graduate.

I don’t think *anyone’s* culture deals with pride very well. Everyone agrees humility is a virtue but, even so, it seems a rare commodity. In Africa, to be perceived as a leader you have to come across as one—charismatic, larger than life, authoritative. You know the type.

Strong leadership

There’s a memorable story about an election in one African country, where a reporter was interviewing people on the street about who they had voted for. “The president,” one older lady had replied.

“And what made you decide to vote for him?”

“Because he is the president.”

Not sure that the lady had heard correctly, the reporter changed tack. “OK,” she said, “why didn’t you vote for the other guy?”

“When he’s the president,” came the reply, “then I’ll vote for him!”

Around here, people are only leadership material if they already have power and if they look like they know what to do with it. This can make pride, not humility, come across as virtuous. This can also be true in the church. People are seen as leadership material when others are already following them.

The authority of the Word

It is vital that my students know it is OK to question authority (including mine) as they study at GWC. One day they will be running a ministry, and they will have to be able to stand on the authority of the Bible, not on their pride or gifts. They will have to be ready to receive correction from time to time too.

It is sobering for me to help prepare my students to stand on God's word alone in their future positions of authority. Honestly, this gets harder year by year. Every January, the new crop of students seems somehow younger and naiver than the last. And every January I'm one year more experienced than I was the previous year. I feel the gap widening.

But humility has to be modelled. If my students look up to me at all, I hope they see someone who works hard to know the Bible, who trusts what God says, and who is humble enough to change his mind when he is wrong. Anything else would be a tragedy.

Ultimately, it's not about me at all—my students and I are all sitting on the same side of the classroom. That's why I encourage students to challenge human authorities and (under Christ) think for themselves. We're all disciples together, and we all have the same tutor. It's Jesus' church, and his Spirit who teaches us all. And so, as we follow Jesus Christ—who thought even equality with God wasn't something to boast in—we seek to be like him. When God became a servant, he showed us how to use real authority. In the end, that's what keeps us all humble.

go



Lecturing in a theological college to students requires both academic qualifications and humility of character. If you know someone like this, encourage them to contact their CMS branch about opportunities to serve.



Images: Top, Elias Makumbini (Zimbabwe), Dale May (South Africa), Kathryn Morrison (South Africa), and Portia Mutisi (Zimbabwe) listening to the Matriculation address at GWC; Centre, The GWC community in prayer at chapel; Bottom, Nathan and his 2019 Hebrew class, still smiling even in November.

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BEING CHRIST'S *servant*



CMS missionary Judith Calf served in Tanzania for many years, returned to Australia and is now back in Tanzania. Judith reflects on the daily challenges of serving in mission with humility, and how she seeks to follow the example of Jesus.

When I was asked to write about humility in mission, my first thought was ‘I am not comfortable with doing that!’ Writing about how I live out humility in my life and ministry in Tanzania feels boastful. I was uncomfortable too as I wondered how what I might write would reflect on my Tanzanian colleagues and friends. Nevertheless, after much thought and prayer, here are my reflections.

When I teach my students, it is not just the words of the classroom, but how I interact with them that counts most.

Starting with privilege

Greg Anderson describes (see page 5) how mission in particular contexts can be unavoidably hierarchical. It often involves ‘patron-client’ relationships, with privileged Westerners working alongside less-privileged individuals and communities.

So it is in East Africa. By the standards of many, I am rich and powerful.

I am not always financially richer, as more and more Tanzanians climb the economic scale. But I am rich in education, in access to resources, in life experiences from around the world, in knowledge, in being able to navigate information technologies. I am a *mzungu*—the word most commonly used since colonial days to describe white Europeans ruling over African nationals. I am a CMS missionary, which in the eyes of many Tanzanians places me in a position of honour and inherited respect (for all who have gone before me). Tanzanian Anglicans still esteem those

who came with the gospel. And I am a Bible teacher—principal of a Bible college in a position of leadership and authority.

These attributes and more place me firmly in the ‘patron’ position. So does that make my colleagues, my students, and my friends the ‘clients’?

Adapting to culture

‘Patron’ and ‘client’ positions come with responsibilities and expectations. A patron’s role is to lead, guide, protect and defend. Should I then expect loyalty, respect and even obedience from my ‘clients’? I am greeted daily with ‘shikamoo’—literally ‘may I hold your feet?’ (a sign of submission) by all who are considered lower than me in age, status and position. The response I give is ‘marahaba’—literally ‘I accept’. Although it often does not sit well for this Australian gal, raised in a flat and egalitarian culture where the tall poppy syndrome reigns, I respond appropriately to the salutations of my students and colleagues.

Humility in mission asks, when do I give the greeting of ‘shikamoo’ to another? Should I? Well, yes, I do. Sometimes I forget and roll into the familiar position of being a peer, a fellow servant, a co-worker in the gospel, because that feels more comfortable and reflects both my cultural values and those I see in the Bible. But at other times I consciously seek to honour others in a culturally meaningful way. I bob a short curtsy and say ‘shikamoo’ to a senior Christian leader, to an older lady I pass on my afternoon walks and even on occasions to a local government official. After more than 20 years of ministry in East Africa, it comes more easily.





Following the example of Jesus

I'm guided by the model of Jesus described by Paul in Philippians 2. Jesus left his power and authority, emptying himself to be a slave so that he could complete his Father's mission, even unto the cross. As a patron I am guided by the model of Jesus the rabbi, as he led his own disciples with conviction, patience, love and authority.

So when I teach my students, it is not just the words of the classroom, but how I interact with them that counts most. On Thursday nights we have fellowship meetings in my house. As I sing and dance, and join in the all-together praying in loud voices, I step outside my comfort zone. I share my own prayer needs and together we are the body of Christ in action. Where possible, I provide for some of their material needs—a bus fare and cash after an urgent call to return home because of a sick wife or deceased family member, a loan to help buy a sewing machine so an evangelists' wife can provide income for the family, a visit to their home village and church, eating their food and sharing in their community.

I also receive their gifts with gratitude—a chicken, some eggs, bananas; asking that they help me with cutting the grass, or clearing my driveway—honouring their role as the client, providing a way for them to fulfil their obligations in a meaningful but not humiliating way. Is this humility in mission? It sits more comfortably to see it as accumulated wisdom and cultural understanding from living and serving in love with my Tanzanian brothers and sisters. It is an intentional honouring of their cultural values as we strive together to be servants of Christ.

The hardest battle

Perhaps my hardest battle in humility in mission is returning to my own cultural heritage and church. I become more the

client than the patron; the lesser one. I am dependent, relying on the generous giving of others. I cannot demand support, but just humbly ask that others may be led by God to partner with me in mission. My prayer is that I neither be Australian, nor Tanzanian, but simply a servant of Christ, with a message of grace and forgiveness to all the nations.



give



As Australians, we have been placed in a position which enables us to give generously to support others as they seek to model and teach Christ across the world. To support missionaries like Judith and others, go to give.cms.org.au.

Big plan, small part



CMS missionary Terry Blowes, serving with Peter, works in local student ministry in Buenos Aires, Argentina, encouraging and mentoring leaders and others. Here

Terry shares about how God called her to accept a tiny part in his big plan.

When we returned to Argentina in 2015 for a second tour of service, I was asked to work with the Asociación Bíblica Universitaria Argentina (ABUA) Buenos Aires student group. Together with an Argentine staff worker, we would be especially focusing on discipling and training the female leaders.

I was glad not to be given a leadership role. Argentina—especially Buenos Aires—had changed a lot in the ten years we had been out of the country. Before, we had lived in smaller provincial cities, but now we were adapting to living in a megacity. It was very different! Understanding the mindset of city dwellers was a major challenge that required a lot of listening, observing and avoiding judgement in the midst of much frustration.

New challenges

After our first year, the Argentine staff worker said he wanted a sabbatical. All of a sudden, I found myself as the only staff worker in a city of 100 universities and 700,000 university students! I was overwhelmed with the magnitude of the challenge and felt totally unable to fill the role.



I reflected on this experience and how it related to humility. Firstly, my reaction *could* be read as humility, inasmuch as it was a realistic view of my limitations! But then I thought of Moses, when God told him to liberate Israel from captivity. His focus on his personal limitations wasn't the response

the Lord expected from him. God had given him a task and expected him to respond with faith, not self-doubt.

It is important that we have a realistic grasp of our own strengths and weaknesses, but Christian humility is about receiving with faith the challenges the Lord gives us. The foundation of our humility is a recognition of our total dependence on God to achieve what we cannot.

With sober judgement

In Romans 12:3, Paul tells each member of the church to think about themselves with “sober judgement according to the faith that God has distributed to each of you”. Not inflated and puffed-up. Not deflated. But aware of what they have received from God and ready to use it to build up God's people.

My initial response demonstrated my anxiety more than any humility. The job was certainly too big for me, but God expected me to be his co-labourer, trusting that he would bear fruit through me according to his will.

Also, I pictured a well-organised ministry with trained local staff coordinating large, active student groups, and came into a situation that was a long way from this end goal. I saw huge needs and challenges and knew it was way outside my ability to resolve. The second step in learning humility was to accept that, in God's sovereign plan, my part may be very tiny! God wanted me to faithfully disciple the handful of committed students we had in our group, trusting him to take the next step with them in the way that he would choose.

Leading with Moses-like humility

There are many challenges in exercising Christian leadership in the humble way Jesus taught his disciples—being a servant, and aiming to build others up, often at your own expense.



And yet exercising leadership means going ahead, accepting responsibility, correcting and teaching.

It is very hard to know how to achieve this balance in a Latin American context. The word 'leader' means 'tyrant' to many people, but, at the same time, people expect leaders to have strong characters and not hide their gifts and talents, or they don't listen to them!

Numbers 12:3 says that Moses was "a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth." And yet he exercised a strong level of public leadership. Perhaps his humility is partly understood in light of the preceding episode, where 70 elders received a share of God's Spirit that was in Moses (Numbers 11:24-29). There, Moses expresses his great desire that all people would be filled with the Spirit. He was learning that the weight of responsibility in the leadership of God's people is better shared with all of those God equips to serve together.

Christian humility is about receiving with faith the challenges the Lord gives us.

Serving together

Three years after the challenge described above, I praise God for the keen Christian students I have been able to work with. There is no doubt that they complement my abilities, and that God is using our combined talents to make small inroads into reaching students in Buenos Aires. They have a fearful awareness of the great challenges presented in their university faculties, combined with an eager and prayerful enthusiasm to embrace the challenge in the power of God; a great demonstration of Christian humility.

In Philippians 2:1-11 Paul urges the local church to have a unity of purpose, achieved by following the example of humility of our Lord Jesus. The purpose in verses 10-11 is that Jesus would be honoured by all people and that as a result God would be glorified.

Since we first became missionaries in 1986, God has been presenting us with challenges way outside our personal abilities. Even with all of our past experience, God continues to show his fatherly love by regularly testing our dependence on him. Humility does not require avoiding being in the front line. But it does mean receiving from God's hand the challenges he gives us, together with the local body, depending on God to achieve his purposes through us, so that Jesus' name is honoured, and God the Father is glorified.

Terry's husband Peter, also working with ABUA in Argentina, has written some reflections on serving with humility in mission too. Find out what he has to say at

cms.org.au/who-decides-humble

go



The desperate need to proclaim the gospel globally is too big for humans to handle alone. But is God calling you to a small part in his great plan? Contact your CMS branch to find out more.



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LEARNING PATIENCE



CMS missionary Grace Adams, serving with Chris in Timor-Leste, was hoping for quick results when she embarked on a translation project. But sometimes God seems to work slowly in his gospel mission.

We had been well-trained by CMS to have realistic expectations about what we might achieve, and how soon. When we were missionaries-in-training, experienced missionaries told us that we would do well in our first term of service—normally three years—if we didn’t do any harm, let alone accomplish anything significant.

Nevertheless, our plan had seemed straightforward. Together with our friends in Timor-Leste, we wanted to take the well-known and popular book, David Helm’s *The Big Picture Story Bible* and translate it into Tetun, the local language.

In reality, it has taken us four years to finally now have reached the point of launching the new translation; a lot longer than we initially hoped. Praise God, the books are now available for Christians in Timor-Leste! But the process has not been quick.

A promising but challenging path

To begin at (nearly) the end. When the books—so we thought—finally arrived, we were literally in tears of joy. They looked beautiful. We couldn’t believe our eyes. We took photos of us holding the book in a celebration mode. We took a sample home. It was then that we looked closely at the words on the pages and realised that they didn’t read correctly. Some letters were missing. ‘fiar’ (which means ‘believe’) was written as ‘far’. What had happened to our text that we checked and checked so many times, to ensure we hadn’t made any basic errors?

To begin at the beginning: even the translation process itself took longer than I’d expected. Not only because I was working around baby Micah’s nap times and feeding times, but because we had to come up with some new Tetun language expressions for Biblical concepts (there is not yet a

Tetun Bible). It took a while for us to decide how to translate ‘Messiah’ or ‘Christ’ or as English speakers might say, ‘God’s anointed king’. It was not so straightforward to convey the rich theological concepts accurately but also naturally.

Once we’d translated the text, we got a number of people to check it to ensure quality: a university lecturer in the Tetun language (who happened to be a devout Catholic), children in the targeted age group, uneducated mothers who would be reading the book to the children. We checked the translation by testing it in church Sunday schools and school religion lessons. That was a rewarding but time-consuming process.

We could have taken an easy route to publishing the book, and saved time and effort. We could have employed a graphic designer to do all the work regarding inserting text, creating a cover and so on. Ex-CMS missionary Michael Collie from SparkLit¹ visited for a couple of weeks to train us and help us with the graphic design, because we wanted our team to learn the skills to be able to do future book projects themselves.

Working alongside Timorese

We sought ways to print locally to encourage local industry and economy. This meant visiting a number of different local printers before eventually realising that they did not have the capacity to print the book with the quality we were aiming for. The next option was going with a local printing agency that linked us with a printer in Indonesia.

After a long wait for the books to arrive, the printed books came back with errors relating to the text (as noted earlier). We did not want faulty translations in common use so had to dispose of them appropriately, which took much creativity. The books didn’t burn. We didn’t have shredders. Some suggested using the boxes of books for furniture!



We were also grateful for the Scripture Union working committee (made up of local pastors and leaders from six denominations) who advised us right through this long process about price, getting the word out to their churches, and so on. But decisions made through the committee also slowed us down. Did I mention that in order for us to invite the committee members to a meeting, we needed to write up an invitation, print it, and physically go to their house, church or workplace to deliver it? People here don't normally use email. It took ages just to get the invitations out. I didn't know or expect this, and many other things, when we first started the project.

My mum tells me time and again that her prayer for us is that we may not go ahead of God as we serve him.

Changing our expectations to meet God's

We learned some important lessons about God's timing and our patience. We are passionate to see *a world that knows Jesus*, and we naturally want to see that vision realised fast.

But God is not concerned about speed and efficiency like us. If he was, humans would probably not be his first choice as agents to take the gospel to the world, nor prayer be his chosen way to seek dependence on God (we are often slow and disinclined to pray). The coming of Jesus Christ to earth as the Saviour of the world was not speedy either, humanly speaking. God worked over thousands of years in the Old Testament preparing for the New Testament fulfilment in Christ. The sanctifying work of the Spirit takes literally a lifetime. As a result, growing disciples and seeing churches mature is a long process, and one of the reasons why CMS is committed to long-term ministry over many generations.

My mum tells me time and again that her prayer for us is that we may not go ahead of God as we serve him in Timor-Leste. When I have prayed this prayer as well, it has helped me adjust my expectations of how fast things will happen. Our times are in God's hands.



Not only CMS missionaries but those who support them can sometimes look for quick results. Consider writing a letter (not an email) to encourage those whose progress may seem slow in human terms—especially in times of lockdown.

Images: Header, Scripture Union Timor Leste worker, Sandra, working with Grace on the Big Picture Story Bible; Centre, testing the translation with children at a community church; Bottom, working on the graphic design side of the project with Michael Collie from Sparklit Australia.

ACCEPTING CORRECTION



CMS missionary Julie Field, serving with Martin in Asociación Bíblica Universitaria Argentina (ABUA) in Argentina, has had a difficult year in ministry. Here she reflects on the humbling joys and challenges of being a 'parent' to those she serves.

We have been serving Argentine uni students for the past 12 years. In 2007 I arrived in Argentina as an energetic 35 year-old woman, and my dealings with our twenty-something student friends felt like an exchange between older and younger siblings.

However, I remember clearly a moment in time, quite a few years ago now, when my perspective of our relationships with university students changed. I realised with a bit of shock that these dear students saw me not as a big sister, but more as a mother figure. I suppose it shouldn't have been such a revelation to me, because even though I may only be a few years older than some, my life stage as mother to four kids contributed to this perception. I also noticed that many of our ABUA group felt distanced from their own parents, either because they are physically far from their family home, or because the emotional closeness was just never present with their own mum and dad. So many years ago, I embraced a 'mothering' role to a wider group beyond my own four children. That's the beauty of being in God's eternal family!

Joyful parenting with rough patches

For the most part I find parenting a great joy.

But it also has its rough patches.

There's nothing quite like the well-aimed observation of a child to bring you to your knees. Like in the supermarket queue, with a look of disdain as I hash the local language publicly, my dear offspring utters, "Mum, speak to me in English, not in Spanish". Or more importantly, in the face of my own sin, "Mum, that's a bit critical, don't you think?" Or, "stop moaning about that student event tomorrow, it's your job!"

Receiving correction from our own kids has a particular sting to it, because the ones we are hoping to influence and teach are sometimes used by God to teach us. Many a time I have been served a piece of humble pie from my own offspring.

Lessons from parenting for student work

This past year in Argentina has been our toughest. Latin America in general feels like a ticking bomb. Many neighbouring countries are in severe crisis. Argentina is sharing those pains, and there is a high level of anxiety on the street. I observe mistrust amongst neighbours, road rage as I drop the kids at school at 7.30am, short tempers and tightly held opinions. The general climate of tension and mistrust in others has spilt over into ABUA. Over recent years the communications between different parts of our national student movement have become increasingly strained. But this year, the pot has boiled over.

Personally, I hate confronting conflict. So I have found this experience in ABUA to be very stressful. Added to this, I feel like my reactions to this conflict will speak loudly to my 'spiritual kids', our dear ABUA students and graduates.

As a parent in the face of a scary situation, what are we to do? Hang in there and calm the waters? Pretend that there isn't a problem? Confront the issues?

So as a parent-figure it has been a humbling experience to be rebuked by one of our students to take a stand on a contentious issue in the ABUA community. My human nature, my desire to be liked by others, screams "No! Keep the peace!" But God used a younger, prayerful sister in Christ (one of the recent graduates of ABUA Córdoba) to urge us to be courageous, and to repent of our desire to be



people-pleasers. So we have stepped up to the plate and expressed our position.

And just as I feared, some of our student body have reacted strongly to our stand. Our local group is divided over the issue. Those who think differently feel abandoned by us. One girl even accused me of failing her personally, as she considered me a 'mother-figure'. This has highlighted the nature of my relationship with these students, making the impact and sadness greater for me personally.

Being a good parent doesn't mean my kids will always agree with how I do things, and sometimes I will mess things up. I will need to eat humble pie when they show up my inconsistencies and my sin. But I will also need to keep loving and serving them when they act with immaturity. Just as I seek to grow my kids in godliness, am I equally prepared to accept their correction so that I also might grow to be more like Jesus?

[I]t has been a humbling experience to be rebuked by one of our students to take a stand on a contentious issue in the ABUA community.

Quick to listen, slow to speak

I have been reflecting on the words of James 1:19, "My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry". These words are important for me to hear. I recently spent six long hours carefully listening to the opinions of a female student on our leadership team. She implored me to keep listening to the student body. I find serving alongside these

students requires a balance between acting with humility, seeking to be a peacemaker and listening attentively, as well as speaking truth to the situation of our student movement.

In this complicated moment in Argentine history ABUA needs godly leadership. Please pray that such leaders, in God's grace, will indeed be raised up at this time. May they demonstrate a humble spirit, a desire to listen to students, and a boldness to make decisions for the good of the student movement.



Julie specifically asks: "I implore you to uphold ABUA in your prayers, for the students, staff workers, professionals and friends of this precious student movement."

HUMBLE TEACHING IN A HIERARCHY



CMS missionaries Dave and Leoni Painter have worked in Cambodia for nearly 20 years. Here Dave explains that the path of humility is not easy to navigate, but Christians have an example in Jesus.

I teach at the Phnom Penh Bible school. Most students there are committed Christians from lower to middle class backgrounds in their early 20s. They wear official Bible school uniforms and are meticulously polite towards their teachers. It is a ‘shame-honour’ culture, meaning that students don’t generally ask questions in class—at least in part to avoid the teacher losing ‘face’ if he cannot answer.

Hierarchy versus humility

This hierarchical approach meant that when we first arrived (as non-hierarchically-minded Australians) Leoni and I both felt like ‘fishes out of water’. We looked for role models. Etched in my memory is an older missionary (not Australian) who would shout at and regularly belittle students, always sending them to run personal errands. Students, even older Cambodians, seemed to be in awe of this person, who broke all the missionary ‘rules’ we had been carefully taught in our training at St. Andrew’s Hall. They never learned the language, they employed servants, and lived as a traditional colonising Westerner in the Orient. The temptation was to follow their example to gain respect.

At one school chapel service early on, there was a foot-washing ceremony. The students washed and dried the feet of the teachers, as we sat out the front in a row. To my shame, I did not leave, but went through with the charade—perhaps not wanting to cause loss of face for anyone.

Over the years, I have learned that opportunities to humbly serve appear in many ways. It may be small, like picking up a student’s dropped pen for them. Mostly it is about how we communicate with them in class. I encourage questions and try to answer them carefully. Sometimes I have to answer the same question two or three times. Some days I am hot, tired and irritable. But this is when I must make extra effort. It is no good explaining gospel truths if my life does not match up.

Two opposite language struggles

Most missionaries struggle with humility in language.

When missionaries make their first attempts to teach Cambodian students in Khmer, it must be torturous for listeners. Certain mispronunciations result in quiet mirth, or even outright infectious laughter. This can wear a missionary

down, as we are very aware of our own inability to twist our tongue around certain alien sounds (there are certain words I still desperately try to avoid saying). For many it is easier to use an interpreter. However, failing to grapple with language means that we soon reach the limits of our usefulness. We need to converse with the students in their own tongue, to help them become effective in ministering to others as they proclaim God’s Word in their own context.

Over the years, I have learned that opportunities to humbly serve appear in many ways.

There is an opposite trap. After decades of study and teaching, we can gain a specific technical theological vocabulary. We can pepper sentences with jargon that leaves listeners in awe—yet bemused and baffled. Pride takes hold, and our gospel witness is undermined by the Evil One working in our hearts.

It can be difficult to keep to the narrow path of humility in mission. Our fear and pride pushes us in different directions. So we need to trust and follow the One who humbled himself, served the weak and lowly, and proclaimed the Kingdom though it resulted in ridicule, persecution and death on a cross.

Ian and Jenny Wood have only just begun working amongst Aboriginal leaders. Read how they, too, have been learning humility.
cms.org.au/relearning-humility-wood

care



All of us, including CMS missionaries, struggle with pride. If you see or hear of a missionary making progress in humility, send them a message to let them know that you are thanking God for their example.

GIVING *thanks* TO GOD

HARRY COTTER

We praise God for the life of his servant Harry Cotter, who died in Wahroonga, on 2 March 2020, aged 87. Harry and his wife Olive served the Lord with CMS in Nairobi from 1998-2002, building on their years of ministry in Kenya with CMS-A and Scripture Union between 1961 and 1974. Harry built up God's kingdom in Kenya through his SU work in schools, making friends in every corner of the country. As the CMS representative in East Africa from 1998, he was a means of grace and help to many missionaries of various societies. His profession was school teaching and his passion was for young people to come to know and love and serve the Lord Jesus, in Kenya, in NSW and in Singapore. He and Olive married in 1963 and enjoyed 56 years of Christian marriage and shared ministry. We ask God to comfort Olive and their family, Richard and Judy Shumack, John and Nick (Nicole) Cotter, John and Buff Dickson, Philippa Cotter and David Thomas. The family say, "Death: No sting! Grave: No victory!"

MAREE FARLEY

Let us praise God for the life of Maree Farley, who died on 8 April 2020. Maree was a keen CMS member since her youth and visited parts of Tanzania in 1963, when she got a 'snapshot' of just some of the CMS work in Dodoma, Msalato, Hombolo, Mvumi and Kilimatinde. She did medical examinations of CMS candidates and missionaries for almost 40 years and was the Federal Medical Registrar for CMS-A and the Registrar for the NSW branch from 1981-2002. Maree retired from her medical practice in 2002, having used her medical skills in the service of God and CMS. We praise God for Maree and ask him to bless and comfort all who knew and loved her.

MY FLESH AND MY HEART MAY FAIL, BUT
GOD IS THE STRENGTH OF MY HEART AND
MY PORTION FOREVER.

PSALM 73:26

ST ANDREW'S HALL CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES

Foundations

We thank God that in the middle of the current COVID-19 crisis, building at St Andrew's Hall (SAH) can continue safely. The excavation for the foundations is complete and work on the basement level has now begun.

We are excited that the foundations for the physical building are being laid. But we are especially thankful that the training at SAH is foundational in preparing missionaries for the shocks and surprises they will encounter in crossing a culture. It's an essential part of how CMS fulfils the vision of *a world that knows Jesus*.

CMS missionary Josh Apieczonek, who trained at SAH with Susannah in 2014, describes their training there as a precious, powerful time of reflection, realignment, learning and living together. He says "it's like a partial vaccination against foot-in-mouth missiological practices, and taught us always to listen and ask questions before critiquing or judging."

Pray

Pray that construction will continue on time, on budget and safely. Continue to pray for the CMS trainees in Melbourne, who are learning remotely due to COVID-19 restrictions.

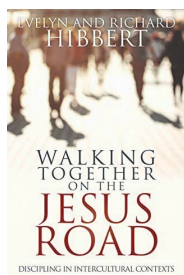




BOOK REVIEW

Hibbert, Evelyn and Richard, 2018, *Walking Together on the Jesus Road: Discipling in Intercultural Contexts*. William Carey Press. Littleton, USA.

Review by **Gordon Cheng**
Editor at CMS Australia



Evelyn and Richard Hibbert are former long-term missionaries who pioneered church plants amongst Turkish speakers in Bulgaria. Richard now lectures at Sydney Missionary and Bible College.

The Hibberts' book defines and sets out what is involved in 'intercultural discipling'. The true discipler, they maintain, is God's Holy Spirit. We human disciplers are secondary to his work. Discipling is done by 'walking together along the Jesus road'—admitting that we as disciplers are weak, and will often ourselves be taught by the faith of disciples from the other cultures we minister in.

They illustrate general principles with challenging examples. A Fijian discipler in Chad says:

I discovered that my Fijian concept was wrong... It was so easy to say 'love your wife' and then tell the men to help their wives clean the house or hang the clothes up. But that's a Western concept. The wives themselves didn't want it because they feel it tells the other women 'I am a lazy wife'. (page 75)

The Hibberts work to anchor their principles in the example of Christ. Their definition of disciple as 'learner' comes from their view of Jesus as the expert disciple-maker. This leads them to encourage intercultural disciplers to themselves be learners, sharing not only the gospel but (like Jesus and Paul), their lives as well.

Simon Gillham, Head of the Department of Mission at Moore Theological College, says of the Hibberts' book, "It is new and Australian, and a great resource for CMS supporters to be introduced to."

For a longer review see

cms.org.au/walking-jesus-road

KIDS ACTIVITY WORKSHEETS

God wants kids to share his heart for the world too!

Jump online and grab printable kids' activity sheets at

cms.org.au/kids-activity-sheets

Learn about different cultures, meet the CMS missionaries who work there, and pray for people all over the world to know Jesus.




CMS PERU Name: _____ Recommended age range: 8-11 years old

Peru is in South America, and the CMS missionaries there teach the MOCCLAM Bible course. The course started in Australia, but now you can study it in Spanish too. Lots of Spanish-speaking Christians all over the world are learning about Jesus through this course. It helps us teach people God's big plan and show how the whole Bible is all about Jesus. To learn more about Peru and the Bible, have a go at these activities!

ACTIVITY

Three quarters of the world's alpaca population live in Peru and the landscape is full of mountains and grassy plateau. This alpaca is alone—draw it some friends and a background of its environment it may live in.



Did you know? Peru has more than 55 varieties of corn!

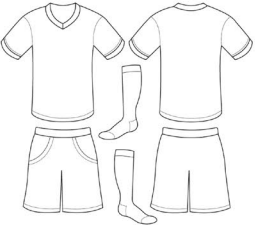
Fun fact: In Peru, you call your dad and a potato the same word: *papa*!

CMS BOLIVIA Name: _____ Recommended age range: 8-10 years old

Bolivia is in South America, and the CMS missionaries there teach the MOCCLAM Bible course. Many people in Bolivia love Jesus and just like us, they need to know God's plan. The MOCCLAM course teaches people how his plan begins with the creation, and because of Jesus' great power in dying and rising again, it ends with all of us being part of a new creation! To learn more about Bolivia and the Bible, have a go at these activities!

ACTIVITY

Bolivians are crazy about soccer. Their soccer team is known as La Verde, which means 'The Green'. Design your own soccer jersey and give it some colours and symbols that match your personality.



Did you know? Bolivia has two capital cities: La Paz and Sucre.

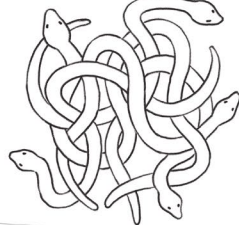
Fun fact: La mordida is the name of the Bolivian tradition where the birthday boy or girl gets their face stuffed into a cake!

CMS IRELAND Name: _____ Recommended age range: 8-10 years old

CMS missionaries work in Ireland with children just like you! And not only children, but also people who teach children in churches all around the north of the country. Just like St. Patrick, Son and Holy Spirit, and he loves us!

ACTIVITY

There are no wild snakes in Ireland! This is because the ocean has stopped many animals, which are common on mainland Europe, from reaching the island. Can you help these snakes untangle themselves by colouring them in different colours?



Did you know? The longest place name in Ireland is Machoonaghastunshilla. It's a small town in the hilly and green county of Galway and translates to 'hills, shaped like a pig's back, between two exposures of dirty water'.

Fun fact: St. Patrick's Day is celebrated in Ireland on March 17.

MISSIONARY SPOTLIGHT



Checkpoint asked "How has being vulnerable opened doors?"



Matt & Kate Vinicombe
serving in North Australia

"Getting your car window smashed may sound traumatic but we rate this as one of the best things that has happened to us in our first 12 months on Groote Eylandt.

One Sunday night the rear window of our 4WD has been smashed, presumably by young kids trying to steal our car. What do we do? How do we get it fixed? How long is it going to take? How much is it going to cost?

The next day after visiting a few people and talking to them about it I remember that Gayangwa, the elderly church leader, has the exact same car in her front yard—which looks like it is slowly being stripped for parts. I drop in, and after telling her the story, I ask whose car it is and whether I could buy the window.

"No, no, no," she said, "It's my car, you just take the window."

Before this we were struggling to make any headway in our relationship with Gayangwa. The smashed window gave us the opportunity to be vulnerable with her, and this is significant in a place where non-Aboriginal people come with all the resources and all the answers and depend on no one but themselves. It gave us a chance to depend on her and gave her the chance to bless us. As a result, our relationship has taken a giant step forward."



Frances Cook serving in Chile

"An extremely awkward situation arose very early one night in the Bible study group I lead. I was struggling to both remain apolitical and maintain the peace between two women of strongly opposed political views when one of them, highly offended, stood to leave. Because the problem was essentially political, I knew that if she went, getting her back would prove very difficult. But I was at a loss to know at that instant how to act. Another lady, of sometimes annoyingly simple faith, piped up with a heartfelt, "But we don't want you to go." The woman stayed, the two were able to make up without talking politics and that was that. Later I was able to thank my dear sister for having saved the group where I was helpless, which greatly encouraged her to see that God could use her. There is a very tense and divisive political situation in Chile at the moment, but God is using these times of hurt and helplessness to bring people together."

GET INVOLVED!

Go to cms.org.au/get-involved OR complete this form:



pray

☐ I will pray for the extension of God's kingdom and would like to receive prayer updates about CMS missionaries and their locations.

MISSIONARY NAME/S



care

☐ I will show practical care for CMS missionaries and the communities in which they serve.

Visit cms.org.au/get-involved/care to find out more OR fill in your contact details to receive information about caring for CMS missionaries.



give

☐ I will give money to CMS so the work of proclaiming Jesus can continue.

Visit give.cms.org.au OR fill in the form below:

I will give a: ☐ monthly gift ☐ one-off gift

Amount: ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$200 other \$

I will pay by: ☐ direct debit ☐ cheque/money order
(please mail the form) (pay to 'Church Missionary Society')

Credit card: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Expiry: /

Card no.

CVV:

NAME ON CARD

SIGNATURE

☐ Please send me information about making a bequest to CMS.



go

Visit cms.org.au/go OR talk to someone about serving as a missionary by contacting your local branch (see back page).

Title _____ First name/s _____

Surname _____

Street address _____

Suburb _____

State _____ Postcode _____

Phone (H) _____ (M) _____

Email _____

Name of church I attend _____

Best days/times to contact me _____

MAIL THIS TO YOUR CMS BRANCH
(SEE BACK PAGE FOR DETAILS)

Prayer in a time of crisis

Heavenly Father,

We know that all things work to the good of those who love you and are called according to your purposes. We thank you that even Coronavirus is not outside your power. We pray for CMS missionaries and those they work with, who may be suffering, uncertain, or anxious. Please assure them of your daily goodness, and cause them to persevere in the fruit of the Spirit and trust in your word.

We thank you that your gospel remains unhindered in its progress, and indeed that phone and internet have created many new opportunities for speaking the gospel of grace and mercy. We pray for those who hear: that your word will sustain them and that in times of hardship or anxiety, that they will cast their care upon you, and that they together with all your saints may come at last to your eternal glory.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.



CMS (Church Missionary Society) works with churches to set apart, equip and support long-term workers who cross cultures to share the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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