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CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY MAGAZINE



Ask the Lord
OF THE HARVEST

From the Editor



“The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few”. (Matthew 9:37)

Some years ago, after returning from a CMS Summer conference, we had this conversation over dinner: Girls, we’ve had a

great time listening to the Bible and meeting missionaries. Do you think we should offer to go to another country to talk about Jesus? Or join a different church closer to home?

One pre-teen daughter: Would we have to leave our church?

Me: Yes, we wouldn’t be able to stay if I was leading in a church somewhere else.

Same daughter: No!

Not an antagonistic answer. Just a definite answer. In our family, daughters don’t necessarily determine decisions. But here we are, still in Australia and still quite close to where we lived 20 years ago.

In this edition of *Checkpoint*, we hear in our lead article from recently returned CMS missionary John Lovell (now CMS NSW & ACT Executive Director). He asks challenging questions about

whether we should consider offering to serve as missionaries.

Also and in contrast, CMS SANT Executive Director Mark Peterson shares his own story of why he and his family remain in Australia. Others have decided to go elsewhere in God’s world. One choice is not better than the other. But whether we stay or go, loss and sacrifice—for the sake of God’s glory—are part of following Jesus on the path of the cross.

How did CMS missionaries make their decisions to go? We tried to cram as many of their stories as we could manage into this *Checkpoint*. You can go online (cms.org.au) for more. As you read, feel the weight of our Lord’s words to the disciples: “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few.” As you pray for that harvest, consider that you, too, are called to be one of those labourers. It is indeed our Lord’s harvest, and the compassion he feels for his people is a compassion that, by his Spirit, we are called to share, wherever God places us.

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

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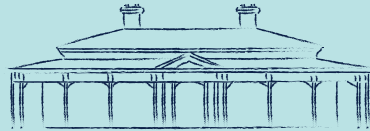
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*Will
you go?*





Until recently, CMS NSW & ACT Executive Director John Lovell, together with Jodi, served with CMS in a church in Valencia, Spain. Here he asks four challenging questions to help others considering the challenge to GO.

In Matthew 28:16-20 Jesus speaks of receiving “all authority in heaven and on earth.”

This is a far reaching and all-encompassing authority. Because of Jesus’ victorious resurrection, he can say “therefore go and make disciples of all nations”.

I heard these words of Jesus during my years in Sunday School and youth group. I remember CMS missionaries visiting and saying why they had chosen to give up the comforts of life in Australia to go and serve elsewhere. We prayed for them and I learned how the church financially supported them. I came to understand that mission was a team effort.

I was very comfortable playing my part as a supporter. We know mission needs supporters. We know mission needs prayer. We know mission needs financial support. Great! I was all sorted and settled that I could obey Jesus’ words and stay where I was.

But how do we discern if we should be the ones to GO (as our family eventually did)?

I suggest four questions will help in making this decision:

1. Have you grasped the need?
2. Have you accepted the cost of following Jesus?
3. Are there good reasons you should *not* go? and
4. Have you sought the wisdom of others?

Have you grasped the need?

There are many things to distract us from grasping the desperate need for the gospel to go to all nations.

Have we perhaps failed to understand the peril of those continuing in rebellion against their creator? As they head towards eternal condemnation, are we all too easily caught up in the busyness of life, inoculated to the need of the millions throughout the world who are lost?

This problem is exacerbated by our human tendency to focus on the immediate circumstances around us. The saying ‘out of sight, out of mind’ is sadly true for many Christians today, and we see it in a lack of concern for the lost.

As we look at churches in Australia, and if we keep our focus narrow enough, some might conclude there is no great need for more gospel workers. Your church may well have several people who can preach and lead Bible studies.

Let me recount how my personal experience changed my perspective. We moved from a large, well-resourced church to serve in a smaller struggling church. The smaller

church was only 15 minutes away, but the contrast was massive. Rather than thinking ministry was only for those with extraordinary gifts, I quickly saw that ministry was for all who loved Jesus and were willing and able to serve in response to the many needs. This shift in thinking prepared me well for later cross-cultural service.

One of the many joys of serving in a gospel-poor country like Spain was serving in a place with such need. Our church in Valencia had no pastor for three years before we arrived. We were the only Anglican church in Spain’s third largest city, with a population approaching a million people. The university staff worker I mentored had no formal theological training, and was responsible for ministry at three universities.

Jesus’ words in Matthew 9:37 challenge us: “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few.”

Instead of starting with ‘why go?’ try starting with ‘why *not* go?’

Have you accepted the cost of following Jesus?

Are we willing to hand over our lives to Jesus, for his purposes, for his glory, without reservation? For me—perhaps for you too—this was an area where I needed to be challenged.

In God’s good timing, this challenge came in my final year of theological training. We were excited about the possibility of church planting in north-west Sydney. However, God unsettled our settled plans!

I had to preach on Luke 14:25-33 at the church where I was serving as a student minister. Here Jesus tells two short parables, the first about a man building a tower and the second about a king going to war. In both situations, you wouldn’t even begin the task without first knowing you can finish successfully. You assess what is required first then act accordingly. Jesus’ conclusion is confronting: “In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has *cannot* be my disciple.”

Teaching this passage not long after hearing the need for church planting in Spain was unsettling. I was confronted by the call to costly discipleship. I remembered Jesus’ words in Luke 9:23, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”

The call to take up our cross *daily* reminds us that following Jesus is not a one-off task to complete, then move on from. It is the ongoing shape of the Christian life. In my case, my choice to leave a career in corporate telecommunications management—a ‘dream job’ I was offered just before resigning—to train for gospel ministry did not mark the end of costly discipleship decisions. This type of decision is what followers of Jesus are called to do. And we will *continue* to do this every day for the rest of our lives or until Jesus returns.

We must be constantly ready for God to unsettle whatever other plans we may have.

Are there good reasons you should *not* go?

Instead of starting with ‘why go?’ try starting with ‘*why not* go?’ As we better understand the genuine obstacles some people face, preventing them from serving cross culturally, we might be challenged to re-examine our own reasons.

Many Christians long to be sent as missionaries. But life’s circumstances mean that under God, this does not seem the wisest path to take as they serve Jesus. This can be a very painful realisation, and we ought to stand with those who live with this disappointment and encourage them in the valuable part they play.

It could be that the health of a family member could not be adequately cared for in a cross-cultural context. It could be that there are significant wider family responsibilities or needs, such as caring for an ageing parent. It could be that a child has special needs that could not be well-accommodated.¹ It could be that for several reasons, a person does not have the resilience to thrive in a long-term cross-cultural ministry context.

We can learn from those who are eager and keen to serve cross-culturally, but for one or more of the above reasons need to stay. We can honour their commitment and zeal by supporting their mission partnership and asking ourselves: ‘why shouldn’t I go?’

Have you sought the wisdom of others?

A final question worth asking is this: have you sought the wisdom of others?

In Romans 12, Paul speaks of believers as part of a body, each with different functions and gifts. As we think about the work of mission and discerning who should go, humbly seeking the counsel of others is incredibly important. Our self-assessment is so easily misguided. For many who struggle with self-awareness, this will include a failure to realise we lack self-awareness! Paul gives good advice:

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many

members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. (Romans 12:1-5)

CMS deliberately involves many people in the process of discerning the Lord’s will and arriving at a decision to send and support a new long-term missionary. Just as the work of mission is a team effort, so is the process of discerning who should go. Are you ready to ask those who know you well what they think about your suitability to be a long-term cross-cultural worker? In our case we spoke to Christian parents, family, close friends and our minister, all of whom offered thoughtful comments on how God might use us. The decision to GO as a missionary requires careful consideration and wise input from others within the body of Christ.

A challenge for you

Have you been challenged to consider whether you are someone who will GO?

As we consider the need, the cost, the potential obstacles and seek the wisdom of others, remember the joy and privilege it is to serve in God’s plentiful harvest field! Jesus gives us a wonderful promise to remember: “Truly I tell you,” Jesus said to them, “no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.” (Luke 18:29-30)



In this article John has made a series of challenges and asked several questions. Ask God for wisdom to reflect on your own situation.

BEYOND THE *façade*



CMS missionaries Daniel & Kate Morris, are serving in Lille, France. Kate challenges us to remember that Europe is not Christian, and explains why there is a great need for more gospel workers.

What comes to mind when you picture Europe? Perhaps the spectacular beauty of the Notre Dame Cathedral in France, the glistening waters of the canals of Amsterdam, or the bustling tourist-filled city of Brussels. Europe has come to trust in this dazzling wealth and beauty. Europe has rejected Christianity, preferring to carve its own gods from worldly pleasures and earthly wisdom.

But hope in anything other than Christ is not a hope that lasts. The beauty of Europe is a façade hiding its spiritual destitution. Yet cracks appear. Notre Dame Cathedral recently experienced a devastating fire, Amsterdam's canals are becoming choked with pollution, and the once-busy streets of Brussels have been emptied of tourists due to Coronavirus. What does Europe have to hope in when it has openly rejected the gospel and its false gods are so easily destroyed?

Our decision to GO

When we lived in Australia, Daniel and I prayed for Europe, particularly France, for years. We could see the desperate need for the gospel, so we joined with missionaries in France in begging God to grow his church there, and to raise more local and international workers for France. As partners in Australia we know we had a real part in what was happening in France. God used us to prayerfully and financially support the work, and so we were part of the answer to our own prayers!

Eventually, we decided to go further and join the team on location. It was extremely costly in so many ways to leave Australia, but we went because we want to see *a France that knows Jesus*. There are so few Christians in France, yet so many who need to hear the gospel. God is working powerfully in France, growing his people in maturity and growing his churches.

Essential work

Our city of Lille is in the north of France. Although it is the fourth largest city in France, it's referred to as 'the sticks' and

is surrounded by farms and fields. When the Coronavirus caused complete lockdown in France, only essential workers could leave their homes. Public transport almost completely stopped and there were very few cars. Yet there were still many tractors on the roads. The farmers continued to work because their work is essential. Despite the pandemic, fields must be ploughed, seeds sown, and harvests collected.

...we were part of the answer to our own prayers!

Gospel work is essential too, and it cannot wait. The field is being ploughed. Seeds are being sown. The harvest is plentiful, and the workers are few. We are partnering with keen local workers and people across France are turning to Christ. God is at work!

Furthermore, CMS supporters in Australia are essential too. Your generous financial sacrifices fuel us, and your prayerful support is used by God.

Please don't be distracted by Europe's thin façade of wealth and Christian heritage. See through the cracks to its desperate gospel poverty. As Europe continues to suffer from the crippling blow of the pandemic, would you commit to supporting the essential work here? Europe is impoverished, suffering, and lost. Please consider partnering with missionaries in Europe as we work to see *a Europe that knows Jesus*.

go



Behind the beautiful façade, secularism and the hardness of people's hearts can make mission work in Europe very challenging. Do you have the character and conviction needed to serve there? Learn more by contacting your local branch (see back cover).



We DON'T go alone



After 11 years serving in Mexico, CMS missionaries Peter & Sarah Sholl have recently returned to Australia for Final Home Assignment. Peter reflects on the great joy of going in fellowship with others.

For years the image I had in my mind of the apostle Paul was of some sort of gospel lone ranger. Travelling along dusty roads and riding leaky boats by himself, preaching to hostile crowds in synagogues and town squares, then bedding down in a quiet corner (or jail) before heading off to the next town to repeat the pattern. Perhaps this image came from the wavy line drawings of the Good News Bible of my childhood, but—like many images we have in our mind—it bore little resemblance to reality.

The reality is that although Paul was an itinerant preacher, he was constantly in the company of others and was part of a wider fellowship. Barnabas, Luke, Silas, Timothy, and Apollos are names that come to mind when we think of Paul's ministry companions in Acts. Romans 16, 1 Corinthians 16, Colossians 4 and Titus 3 contain lists of names of men and women who Paul identifies as faithful co-workers, companions, fellow-workers and servants in the work of the Lord. His letters are full of thankfulness and confidence in believers scattered across the region, and his deep concern for their ongoing faithful service of the Lord is evident in his prayers for them. He doesn't consider himself a lone ranger, but rather a partner with a fellowship of believers.

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. (Philippians 1:3-5)

Serving in partnership

For the last 11 years I have been living in Mexico, serving as the director of MOCLAM. Together with the MOCLAM team, we have been offering theological education courses by distance across the Spanish-speaking world. That chapter of my ministry is coming to an end now, as we have returned to Australia for Final Home Assignment, but as I reflect on the last 11 years, the partnership and fellowship that Paul expresses in his letters echoes in my mind.

There has been an itinerant aspect to my ministry, as I have travelled to different parts of Central and South America, and to Spain, to teach courses in various different contexts. My battered suitcase and dog-eared passport bear witness to many hours sitting on planes, standing in immigration lines and sleeping in different beds. But in this context of usually solo travel, I haven't been some sort of theological education lone ranger. Quite the opposite! I have been blessed to be in partnership with a long list of faithful believers in the Spanish-speaking world and in Australia.

Growing together

For 11 years I have enjoyed and benefited from the insights, wisdom, and hospitality of my Spanish-speaking brothers and sisters. As I have taught them and been taught by them, together we have grown in our understanding of the Bible and what it means to be his people. In the last few months I have received farewell messages from people all over the

globe thanking me for my teaching and service, but there is no doubt in my mind that the fellowship I have enjoyed with these brothers and sisters has shaped me too. It is a wonderful blessing to be a co-worker in the Lord.

I am also deeply aware of the fellowship that I continue to enjoy with partners through CMS Australia. As God has grown the MOCLAM ministry over the last 11 years, the prayers, the communication and the support we have received has been invaluable. From one-line 'we prayed for you at church yesterday' messages, to longer emails engaging with the prayer letters we have sent out, and in-depth conversations during Home Assignment, the CMS fellowship is a real and wonderful expression of the 'co-worker-ness' in the Lord that Paul talks about.

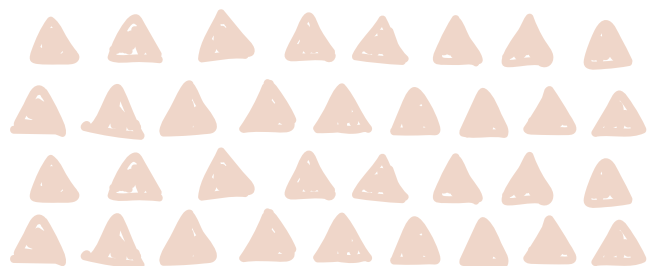
[Paul] doesn't consider himself a lone ranger, but rather a partner with a fellowship of believers.

Going together

From time to time I have a conversation with someone who is thinking of becoming a missionary. Every time I share with them the importance of partnership with supporters back at home, and the wonderful culture of gospel partnership which is part of CMS. The clear priority of gospel proclamation to see *a world that knows Jesus* unifies the partnership at an organisational, church and individual level.

If you are part of that partnership culture, thank you. Keep up the great work as a fellow worker in the Lord. Your support keeps people like me on location and means we can carry on the gospel work we are involved in without the stress of where the next dollar will come from. Your care encourages us to keep going and energises us when we are on home assignment. Your prayers bring our work and our personal joys and struggles before the Lord.

If moving to a new location to serve cross culturally is on your radar, then consider carefully the value of partnership. As missionaries we are not sent to be lone rangers, but rather fellow workers with others in the Lord. You might be the one who ends up going, but there are a multitude of faithful servants who will pray for you, care for you and support you.



care



It is such a joy to partner with CMS missionaries—whether on location, preparing to go or those who have now returned to Australia. Take a few moments now to pray for and encourage a fellow gospel worker in the Lord via text message or email.



Not the retiring type



CMS missionaries Kevin & Karen Flanagan have been linked to CMS for over 40 years. Here they explain their most recent move, back to Tanzania, and challenge others to consider doing similarly.

We've been associated with CMS for over four decades. During this time, we've often felt the 'tug' to cross-cultural work at CMS Summer School. It's been the eternal realities, however, that have ultimately motivated our service for God both in Australia and elsewhere. i.e. Heaven is real. Hell is real. Life is short. Jesus is the only Saviour.

Offering to serve

We reapplied to serve as CMS missionaries in 2016. At the time, along with the motivation of the eternal realities, we considered the following things—energy, enthusiasm, experience and expertise. Were we still energetic along with having a good measure of general health? Were we still enthusiastic for ministry? Would nearly 20 years' experience in parish ministry count for something? Yes! We knew too, that in many cross-cultural situations, there's a grey hair advantage. Under God, our experience in parish ministry had given us a measure of expertise in the areas of Bible teaching, training and discipleship, work we knew we loved. The words of Luke 12:48b ring in our ears, "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."

Heaven is real. Hell is real. Life is short. Jesus is the only Saviour.

Would our energy, enthusiasm, experience and expertise be transferable to another context? Was there a place that seemed wise to CMS and ourselves where we could effectively serve cross culturally; a place that would be a good fit? Kevin had previously served with CMS in Tanzania over 30 years ago. But our re-application to CMS was an open offer; an offer not made with a particular country or people group in mind. As we progressed through the application and training process it did seem the best fit would actually be somewhere in Tanzania. Earlier experience of language and culture had a bearing on

the decision, but we were aware that the country had changed a great deal in the intervening years.

The title of a book written in 2015¹ has worked its way into our brains as this injunction: 'Don't just retire, refire.' We'd like to die with our boots on—a saying that's been in Christian circles for a long time.

Having said this, there are particular costs to be considered by 'recycled' missionaries like us:

- The leaving of both aged parents and young adult children;
- Though it hasn't happened for us, yet, the leaving of grandchildren; and
- The things on the 'bucket list' that might just remain there.

Christian service isn't about achieving goals, being satisfied or feeling comfortable. We can assure you that there'll be a lot of discomfort for those serving cross culturally. In all of this, Jesus' words from John 12:25-26 have recently been a fresh challenge and encouragement to us:

"The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant will also be. My father will honour the one who serves me."



go



With a passionate gospel heart, age need not be a barrier. Contact your local CMS branch, (see back page) to find out about opportunities to serve at any time of life.

THE LONG ROAD NORTH



CMS missionaries Wayne Oldfield & Mandy Jones were seemingly settled in their jobs and lives in Sydney. But in 2011 they moved to the Northern Territory to minister alongside Indigenous Christians. Here Mandy explains why.

Why would we become cross cultural workers with CMS? Wayne had worked for 31 years as an accountant at Sydney Water and I, with a background in science teaching, also enjoyed stable ministry jobs in Anglican and Uniting Churches. Here is part of our story.

We began seriously thinking about working with Indigenous Christians after the launch of the Bible in Kriol in 2007—a launch we both attended at CMS Summer School that year. The Kriol speakers who shared the Bible with us were excited, and everything we had heard indicated that what Aboriginal Christians wanted was a clear and culturally relevant understanding of God’s Word.

We didn’t want to look back on our lives in retirement and ask, “What if...?”. The Holy Spirit was instrumental in moving us into a very different world from the settled, comfortable lives we were leading in Sydney. God even used Sydney Water restructures to spur us into action! Wayne studied for a year at Sydney Missionary and Bible College (SMBC), and I also did a unit there called ‘Cross-cultural Teaching and Learning’.

Open doors

When it came time to talk with CMS about working in the Northern Territory, it turned out that both of us could almost immediately walk into roles at Nungalinya College, in Darwin. This indigenous training College is jointly run by various denominations and is part of the Vocational Education and Training sector. Many roles at the college require specific skills to cope with administrative requirements. Nungalinya relies on churches and organisations like CMS providing a proportion of the staff to make ends meet, because government funding covers travel and accommodation for students, but not teachers.

Meeting needs with our skills

In 2011 the college needed a replacement numeracy teacher and someone to teach the Working with Youth Unit. Praise God, I was able to take on those roles.

Wayne had several roles early in our time at the college, but in 2013 he became ‘Weekday Host’. God used Wayne’s pastoral heart to help many students settle into the college and deal with problems while they were there. In 2016, he became one of the Deans, thus using his administrative skills as well as his care for people. It was a role God had already put on Wayne’s heart.

Indigenous Church leaders in remote Australia want to study the Bible in a culturally relevant way, but most leaders do not have the English literacy skills to study in mainstream colleges. The Anglican Diocese of the Northern Territory does not have the resources to meet the need for formal, accredited training. There is clearly a need for places like Nungalinya, which helps students with numeracy and literacy, as well as studying the Bible.

We need more people

The effects of colonialism here are deep, and often painful and traumatic. Many Aboriginal Christians are very thankful that the Christian gospel came, but they are often frustrated by the perceived indifference from the rest of the church in Australia. It is scandalous that it took from 1788 to 2007 to have a full Bible in an Indigenous language. Not everyone can be a Bible translator, but if you are open, it is surprising what God can find for you to do to support the growth of the Aboriginal church in Australia. This ex-accountant and ex-teacher are so glad we’ve come and met the people God has chosen to be his from the remote communities of the North.



care



CMS missionaries within Australia need your support too! We can write letters and emails; and the occasional phone or video call may also be a great blessing.

A LIFETIME *of mission*





CMS missionaries Alan & Helen Wood have spent a lifetime in mission. Here they share how God has continued to lead them to minister the gospel in different places.

Our journey into mission was a gradual process but clearly led by God. Alan became a Christian just before his 20th birthday and only a few months before our wedding. Helen had come from a Christian family and from an early age was experienced as a Sunday school teacher.

Led to Nigeria

God initially led us to Nigeria in 1981 with two small daughters aged four and six years old, even though neither of us had ever been on a plane. This was a major step for us and the beginning of a very different and varied ministry for God.

We spent 12 years serving in Nigeria, coming home only so that our daughters could go to university. But even after another 14 years in Australia, our hearts were still in Nigeria. God sent a Nigerian friend to ask when we were returning.

Returning with CMS

We offered to go back to Nigeria through CMS. We saw and still see that CMS has a rigorous application process—but more importantly, once a candidate is accepted, they are cared for in a way that is like no other mission organisation. CMS will not send anyone as a missionary who they feel may not be ready. They also support with regular pastoral visits to the missionary on location, to assess how they are coping. With their long-term experience, they see and know what helps sustain missionaries.

After further training at St Andrew's Hall, we went back to Nigeria in 2007. We were still fluent in Hausa (the local language) and saw the great need in the north. So we offered to serve at a theological College in Wusasa, Zaria, expecting that we might stay until retirement.

CMS will not send anyone as a missionary who they feel may not be ready.

God had other plans

These were difficult years in Nigeria, as we saw the steady increase of persecution of Christians in the north and then the systemic terrorism by Boko Haram and others. However, we did not feel our lives were in danger at any time. We were encouraged by the many Nigerian Christians who were not intimidated by the bombings and attacks by insurgents. We were part of the growing swell of advocates for prayer as a

weapon against terrorism. We were blessed to see the steady growth of the college and our small part in its development.

For medical reasons, we returned to Australia in 2013. But just as we were considering taking early retirement in September 2014, our dear friend Bishop Ken Short, only a couple of weeks before his death, suggested we could help in Jakarta, “just for a few months...”

Alan travelled to Jakarta with two suitcases. This began almost six years of service to All Saints Jakarta! In March 2020, we were again repatriated to Australia, this time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and have now retired from CMS.

So, our 40 years full-time service for God—25 of those years being on overseas mission fields—have been extremely eventful. God has taught us so much. We have been reminded time and again of the verse, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him until that day.” (2 Timothy 2:12) Yes, there have been many hard and difficult periods, but we have been in the hollow of God's hand all the time knowing that we are his precious children.



Care



God's care for his workers is often expressed through long-term support from others in CMS. Send a message of support to a missionary, perhaps one you have known for many years, reminding them of God's grace.

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A mission heart



In early 2020, Mark Peterson took up the role of Executive Director of CMS SANT. He shares why his family is not on location in France.

Each year as CMS Summer Conference approaches, my wife Allie and I sit down for another strategy meeting. It really all boils down to one goal, and we're trying to keep it simple:

Attend the whole conference.

Both of us. Or at least both of us attend the daytime sessions, and maybe we take turns for the evening sessions. For CMS SANT, it's only two-and-a-bit days. It should be achievable.

We're repeatedly thankful for the mammoth effort of the kids' ministry organisers to help us. They probably haven't been aware of our silent hope to attend the whole conference together at least once. But (sigh!) we're still yet to meet our goal. Or get anywhere near it, for family reasons.

At a recent summer conference, during a session on ministry possibilities in France or the French-speaking world, my wife and I happened to be sitting together, enjoying hearing the challenge from the platform. My mind started ticking over again about mission possibilities for our family. I studied French at uni, I have family in France, and have visited multiple times.

I leaned over and whispered to Allie, "I wonder if we should think again about France?"

She replied with words of wisdom that have stuck in my head, "Maybe we should get through an entire missions conference before we start thinking about actual mission?"

Challenges on the way

We have a child with a significant intellectual disability. As an aside, I would love to see CMS continue to explore how to enable more people with the appropriate gifting and readiness to head overseas, regardless of disabilities. But for our family (and probably for others), this has been one of the gifts from

above that has led us to stay in Australia. We have wanted to see our nine-year-old with Down Syndrome flourish under God, and whilst we never want to say 'never' about what he can achieve or where he can achieve it, we've come to the point of embracing our South Australian home as the safe and stable platform for his growth (and that of his siblings).

This has been hard to come to terms with, in some ways. Especially when it comes to France.

France needs the gospel

If there was one place in the world we would like to be to celebrate our next big anniversary, it would be Paris. Is the food not delectable? And the fruit of the vine? And the romance of the city? The architecture and the art? It's a culture of beauty and richness, the expression of so many human aspirations, and surely the best place in the world to do mission!

It still surprises many people to hear that France is a gospel-poor nation. "But what about all the cathedrals and churches? What about the history?"

"Maybe we should get through an entire missions conference before we start thinking about actual mission?"

Reasons to go...or not

But as I say this, the mirror is once again held up against my own heart. There isn't necessarily something wrong with loving the culture of the place you go to do mission. But the

FROM HOME

second big flaw in my plan to be a missionary in France is my own motivations.

Mission in France involves telling one's French neighbours that life and love are not fulfilled in the beauty of French culture, language, history and way of life. Instead, they are found in the God who walked the dirty roads of Israel in the primitive first century, who was beaten up and murdered by his own people. I could go to the other side of the world to serve the Lord in a culture whose beauty captivates me, but I am conscious that the very culture that draws me there is the idol that has chased the gospel away.

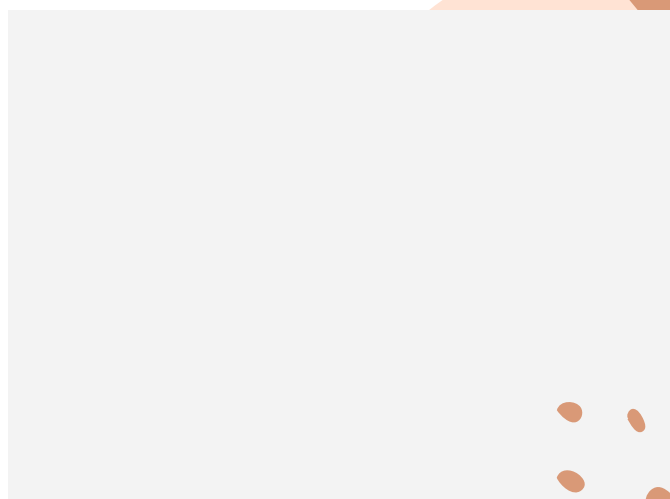
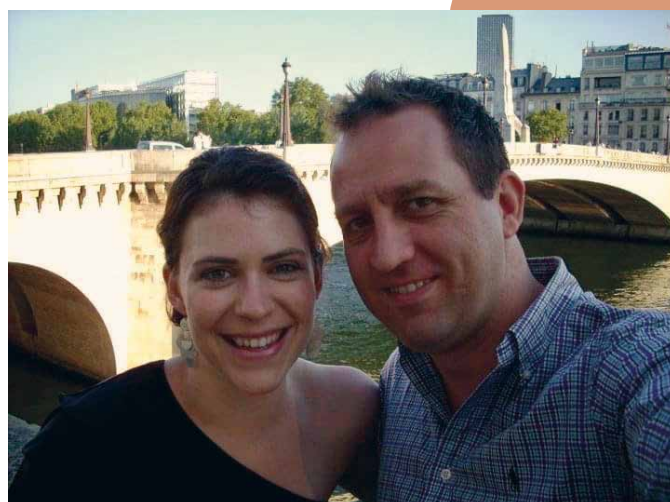
We are not dismantlers of culture, rather we are called to speak of Christ from within the culture. And yet we must always be vigilant about our own hearts and the things we love most. In a conversation with a friend a couple of years ago, he defined idolatry as 'things we think are better than God'.

I am sure God has been kind to me in allowing me to see both my own limitations and my own faulty loves. One way or another, it seems I am not heading to France for mission, and yet I am deeply thankful for those who are.

Finding other ways to contribute

I have been delighted to get involved in global mission via another route. I now have the privilege of contributing to mission as the Director of the South Australia Northern Territory branch of CMS. And perhaps even more fundamentally, I can pray, I can care, and I can give. I don't see these as second-best options. This is how the church does mission. Not everyone goes, but we all have a significant part to play.

Do you agree with me that it is a joy to know that God is sovereign in all of this? I am personally greatly relieved that HE is the one ultimately resourcing and enabling his mission.



CMS loves to see followers of Christ get involved in mission by going. But there are other ways to be partners in that mission. Will you give to support the work of CMS missionaries? give.cms.org.au

OUR JOURNEY TO *mission*

The stories of why missionaries choose to serve in another location are varied, exciting and have a common gospel thread. *Checkpoint* asked missionaries from around Australia to give reasons why they chose to serve as CMS missionaries.



MIKE & KAREN ROE

(SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND NORTHERN TERRITORY),
SERVING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Mike writes: My main contact with Christianity growing up was a kids club, and an annual camp for kids to learn about missionaries. I thought missionaries were nice people, but a bit nuts. When I came to faith at Uni, I suddenly 'got it'. I was convicted that my life goals were all pretty selfish and small... and found that I suddenly wanted to be one of those 'nuts' missionaries. Post-uni, cancer put a hold on things for about six years. But I became a keen supporter of CMS in this time. Then, when I eventually left my oncologist's rooms for the last time (having been told I was cured, and could get on with my life), as soon as I walked out, I just had an overwhelming sense of the Lord saying "Well, that's done. Now, where were we in that whole 'mission' thing?" So I started some conversations, and spent the next 10 years training, serving, and being prepared to serve overseas. (Bible teacher Peter Adam gave me the sage advice to get some ministry experience in Australia first, to ensure that I make my first mistakes on my own people!)

Kids club
& camps

University

Cancer

Conversations

Serving

Training



MATT & KATE VINICOMBE

(VICTORIA), SERVING IN NORTH
AUSTRALIA

Ultimately we decided to become missionaries because of our conviction that the gospel is true for all people, and that God had placed us in the position of being able to share that with people from another culture.



KELLY LANDRIGAN

(NSW & ACT),
SERVING IN FRANCE

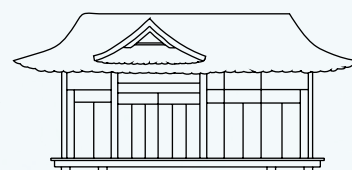
As a young Christian (who hadn't grown up in a Christian home) I was confronted by the fact that in many parts of the world, people would go from birth to death and never even hear about Jesus or have the opportunity to trust in him.



DENE & RACHEL HUGHES

(QUEENSLAND AND NORTHERN NSW), SERVING IN JAPAN

We were in student ministry with AFES (the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students) from 2007-2011 and were always impressed by the deep and long connection CMS had with student ministry worldwide, but especially in Japan. When we were convinced that we needed to live alongside Japanese people to more effectively minister to them, we were able to stand on the shoulders of CMS missionaries past and present.





TIM & OLIVIA MULHERIN

(VICTORIA), SERVING IN
CAMBODIA

We both grew up in CMS missionary families, living overseas and then also involved in CMS back in Australia as young adults. Before becoming a couple, we both felt called to be missionaries from an early age. Once we married, it was clear that this was still God's plan for our life and we slowly worked towards this goal.



DAVID & JENNY JUNIPER

(WESTERN AUSTRALIA),
SERVING IN DR CONGO

After we were exposed to the enormous needs and opportunities of the majority world, we felt we had to do something. We have always felt the weight of Jesus' words in Luke 12:48, "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."



T & E

(TASMANIA), SERVING IN
SOUTH EAST ASIA

We have both long had a passion to cross cultures, which was fostered in our families and expressed itself in cross-cultural ministry in Australia. The many stories of the quality of pre-departure training, pastoral care, and strategic and servant nature of placing workers under national Christians were all factors influencing us to choose to go with CMS.



IAN & JENNY WOOD

(NSW & ACT), SERVING IN
NORTH AUSTRALIA

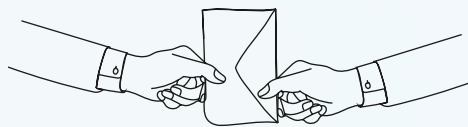
We were working in parish ministry for many years and gradually became even more convinced of the need for good Bible teaching in the rest of the world. We have the opportunity to go ourselves now our children are adults.



ANDREW & MARGIE NEWMAN

(QUEENSLAND AND
NORTHERN NSW), SERVING
IN UGANDA

When we were invited to partner with the North Kigezi Diocese in Uganda long-term, we turned to CMS-A. We knew CMS-A were experts in their preparation of missionaries for long-term work. We knew we needed the cross-cultural training, and we knew that in CMS-A we would be part of a family of believers who are trustworthy in prayer and care.



CHRIS & STEF OVERHALL

(NSW & ACT), SERVING IN
CHILE

All Christians are missionaries and having trained for ministry in the local church, we were open to the idea of serving Christ wherever might be useful. Our link missionaries (the Sholl family) visited our church and spoke about the work of MOCLAM, a Bible training course based on Australian material and now used throughout the Spanish-speaking world. We were excited about the opportunity to train Christians this way, because we'd personally seen and experienced the benefit of having well-trained leaders. We love that CMS is invested in training and equipping local leaders to serve the gospel all around the world.

CMS missionaries Adam & Helane Ramsay write for Checkpoint Online about how they made the decision to serve in Japan. Their article is here:

cms.org.au/serving-in-japan

go



Will you go? Talk to your CMS branch today about the reasons and ways to consider mission in another location.

GIVING *thanks* TO GOD



JOHN DENTON

We praise God for the life and ministry of John Denton, AM, OBE, who died in Bateau Bay on 13 August, aged 91.

In 1954, John accepted the invitation to go to the Diocese of Central Tanganyika (DCT) to work as the Bishop's Administrative Secretary. After marrying in 1956, John and Shirley served as CMS missionaries in Tanganyika from 1955 to 1964.

While with CMS, John worked as the DCT Administrative Secretary and in that role, he coordinated the building program for the diocese. The Regional Commissioner for the British Government's Colonial Service recommended John for the Dodoma Town Council. He worked in that role for three years, during which Tanzania achieved 'Uhuru' (independence) from England.

When John and Shirley concluded their time with CMS, John served as the Secretary of the General Synod Standing Committee and the General Secretary of the Anglican Church of Australia. He was also a member of the World Vision board from 1976 to 1989.

John is survived by his wife of nearly 64 years, Shirley and their four children, Heather, Louise, Andrew and James.



JOHN SCHULTZE

We praise God for John Schultze, who died on 14 September, aged 92.

John began his service with CMS in 1951, working at Ngukurr on the Roper River as the mission mechanic. In 1957 he married Ruth, who had joined CMS in the NT in 1953. For the next 16 years, their home and work were in Numbulwar.

John and Ruth served together in the NT, showing friendship and hospitality to all. In 1973 they settled in Doveton where they continued to support CMS. We thank God for John's life, and pray for comfort for Ruth and family.

JOHN BROOK

We give thanks to the Lord for the life and faithful service of former CMS missionary, the Rev John Brook who died in October this year.

John worked as an apprentice and electrical fitter for ten years before training for the Anglican ministry. Ordained in 1955, he served at Holy Trinity, Adelaide before ministering in Rozelle, Normanhurst, Hurstville and Castle Hill in Sydney.

John was married to Joan. They had two children, David (deceased) and Kathryn, and five grandchildren. John and Joan served as CMS missionaries in Indonesia from 1970 to 1974 and were lifelong supporters of CMS.

ST ANDREW'S HALL MEETING MILESTONES

Praise God that despite only being allowed 25% of workers on site, as of mid-September we are on track to complete the building before Christmas. This is contingent on Victoria's COVID situation progressing, so that from October, increased numbers of workers (85%) are allowed on site. We are thankful that the new building can be locked up, and most of the work from now on is internal.

Watch the timelapse videos at cms.org.au/sah-update to see the work done to date.

Pray

Keep praying that the project will be completed on time, on budget and safely.

You can still contribute financially—go to cms.org.au/sah

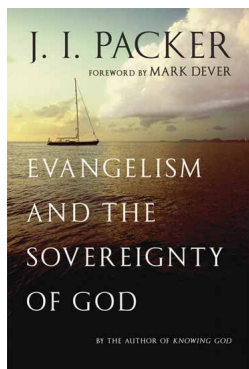




BOOK REVIEW

Packer, J.I. 2012, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, IVP.

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



The problem Packer's book tackles is this: If God chooses before the creation of the world that certain individuals will be his, then what can any individual human do to change our Lord's eternal decree?

It is a particular problem for CMS, which sends people to cross cultures with the gospel in partnership with churches. This takes time, money, effort, and prayer.

Perhaps you have read Bible passages that deal with God's sovereignty in election, such as Ephesians 1 and Romans 9, and have wondered why we should take the gospel to someone who has never heard it?

If those we meet have been eternally predestined to trust in Jesus, then why would we need to speak to them at all? For they will know God because he has chosen them to know him. But if they are not amongst those elected to know God's grace, mercy, truth, and peace, then surely to travel to a close or far neighbour to tell them of Jesus can only make their situation worse?

Packer addresses these and other questions with a typical attention to detail. He summarises the Bible and gives careful attention to objections. Sharp questions abound; does active evangelism mean that we are failing to trust God's decision to save? Can Christians forget about evangelism entirely, confident that God will save those he means to save? Reading this book will encourage you to remember that God has a continuing place for CMS in bringing about a *world that knows Jesus*.



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*.

OUR MISSION



OUR DISTINCTIVES



Read the full CMS vision: cms.org.au/vision

GET INVOLVED!

Go to cms.org.au/get-involved



pray

Visit cms.org.au/get-involved/pray to find out more



care

Visit cms.org.au/get-involved/care to find out more



give

Visit give.cms.org.au



go

Visit cms.org.au/go or contact your local branch (see back page) to talk to someone about becoming a missionary.

CMS Summer conference update

Summer conferences are still happening! Check out the list here to find out what is happening in your state.

CMS NSW & ACT



nswsummerschool.org.au

SET APART

Exploring the sermon on the mount
2-8 January, Katoomba

Speakers

Carl Matthei (Campus Bible Study)
David Williams (Director of Training and Development for CMS)
Mark (Director of a partner organisation in the Middle East)
Glenn Davies (Anglican Archbishop of Sydney)

CMS SANT



cms.org.au/sant/summerconference

LIKE NO OTHER

Calling kids, youth and adults to God's mission
Friday 15 OR Saturday 16 (day program from 9am – 9pm) at Edwardstown Baptist Church, St Marys

Speakers

Luke Wisely (Lecturer in Old Testament Studies at the Bible College of South Australia)
Greg Anderson (Anglican Bishop of the Northern Territory)
D (Worker from East Asia)

CMS WA



GOD'S MISSION TO USE A FREED PEOPLE TO CHANGE THE WORLD

ENDING THE CHAOS

God's mission to use a freed people to change the world
27 February

Speaker

Dan Cole (NT lecturer at Trinity Theological College and ex CMS missionary kid)

CMS QNSW

Summer Series +



cms.org.au/qnsw/summerwithcms

SUMMER SERIES

Speaker

Andrew Reid (Principal of the Evangelical Theological College of Asia)

Dates

On-line resources for use throughout January

SUMMER MELT YOUTH CAMP

(school years 7-12) 7-10 January at Mt Tamborine Conference Centre

Speakers

Jonathan Lee
Philip Van't Spyker

Registration cut off

7 December

CMS VIC & CMS TAS



SUTS 2021

cms.org.au/longing-for-revival

Longing for Revival

14-16 January

Speaker

Sarah & Rene Breuel
(IFES Europe, City To City)
Includes SUTS Kids
SUTS @ Home tickets currently on sale

SUTS YOUTH

cms.org.au/sutsyouth

Unqualified: Dumb stuff the Disciples did

13-16 January

Key speaker

Tom French

Registration cut off

18 December



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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